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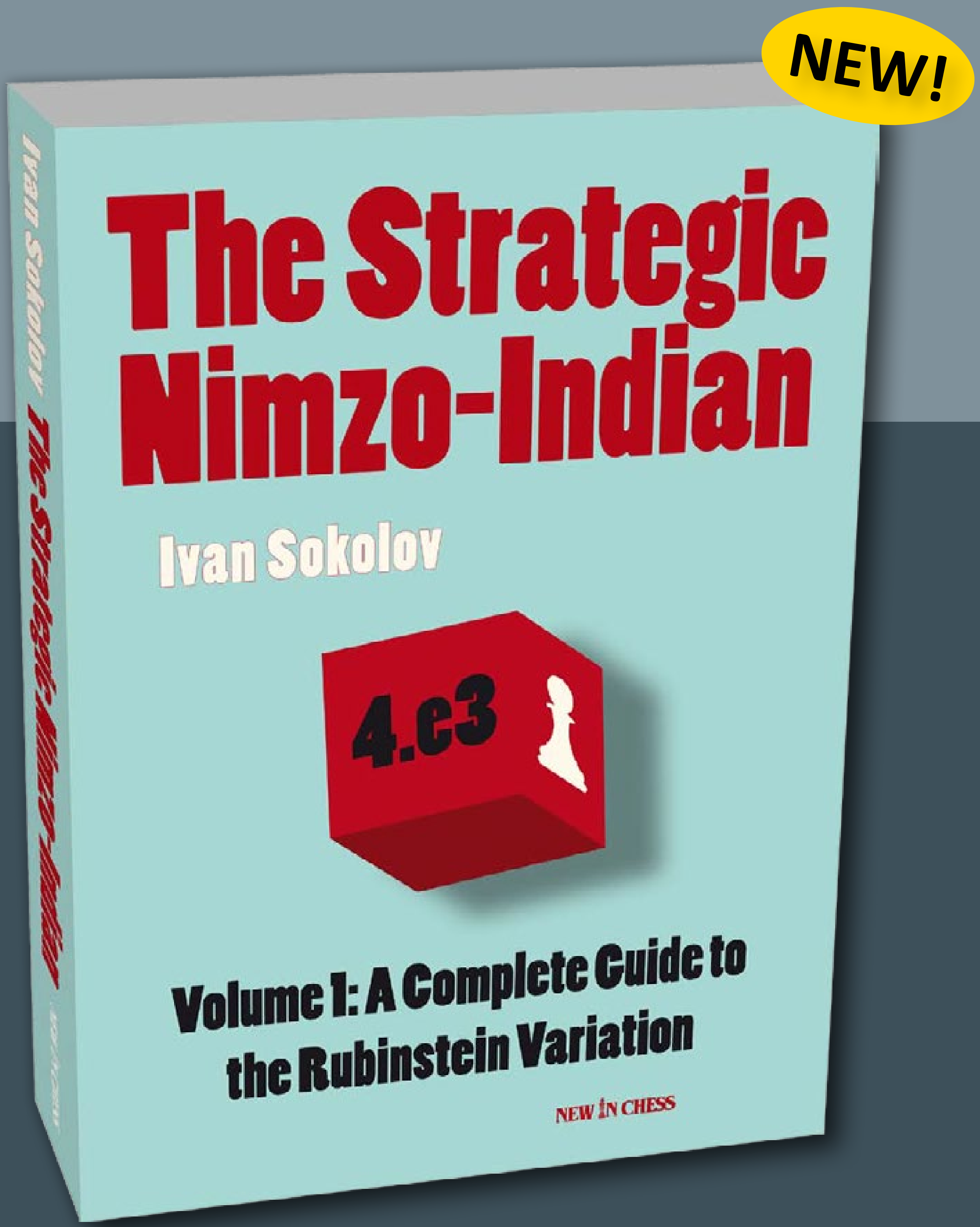

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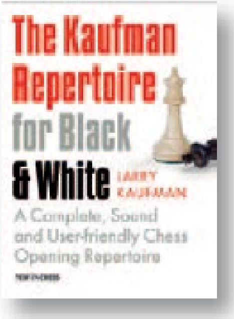

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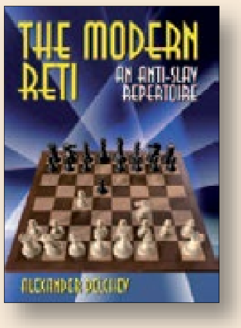

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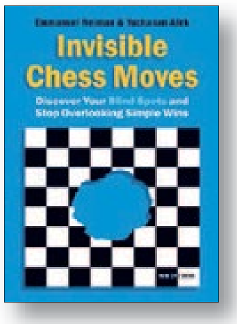

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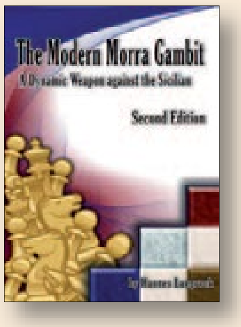

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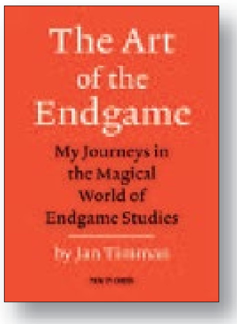

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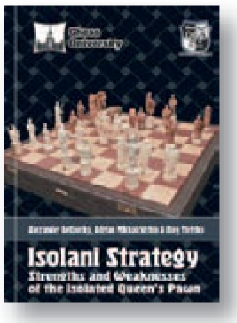

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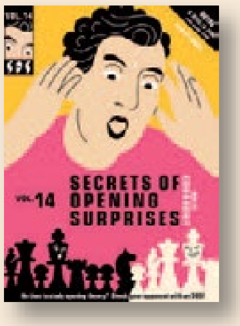

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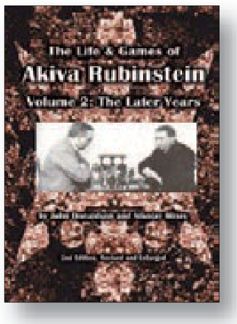

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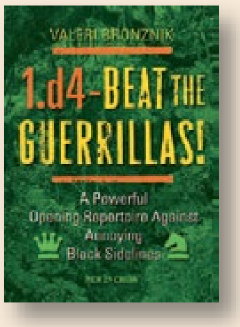

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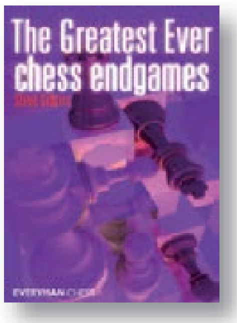

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> 'And Kramnik is the guy to talk to. I think his input into chess is as valuable as Kasparov's, maybe more. The way he continuously changed entire openings, the different aspects of the game, for years. Like some openings people laughed at and that are now main lines, like the Berlin.' – Levon Aronian

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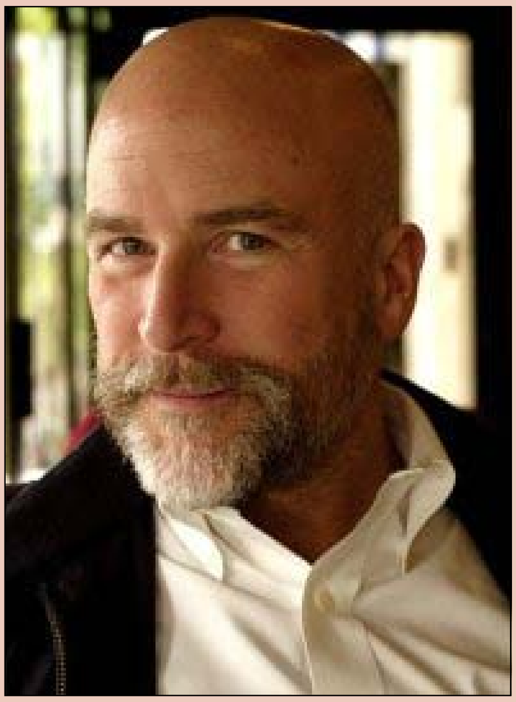
COVER PHOTO
Levon Aronian: Fred Lucas

Chess for the Millions

You'd think you'll get used to it, but in fact you never really do. Once in a while FIDE announces new plans or projects that will propel chess to heights never seen before. We don't have space for a full overview but off the top of our heads here are a couple. There was, for instance, the great news that FIDE president Kirsan Ilyumzhinov announced in 2007. All over the world FIDE was going to build 150 hotels in the shape of chess pieces, the total costs amounting to 50 billion dollars. Or there was, in that same fruitful year, the appointment of David Kaplan as CEO Development of FIDE, the man who saw unlimited possibilities for our game, as, after all, 'one billion people play chess'. One of his ideas was an Internet tournament with a total prize-fund of 64 million dollars, in which everyone, amateurs and pros alike, could take part in 64 categories. He himself was ready to invest 32 million dollars and he'd already spoken to two big banks that were interested, too. Of course, realizing such projects takes time, and they may have been slowed down by the global economic crisis, but we're sure we will soon hear more about these and other glorious projects.


Andrew Paulson: the man the chess world has been waiting for?

For the moment, we are expected to be happy about the signing of an agreement between FIDE on the one side and CNC and AGON on the other. CNC, as we all remember, was created in 2009 'to bring innovative and effective business solutions into the chess world in order to create market strategy for chess development and increase the commercial attractiveness of chess' and we're sure they're also still warming up to show us soon what they've been up to in the past few years. AGON is an offshore company that was created last January by American entrepreneur Andrew Paulson, the owner of several lifestyle magazines and various popular Russian websites. At the FIDE Presidential Board meeting in Al Ain, UAE, where this cooperation was discussed, FIDE Vice-President Ilya Levitov expressed his concern about Paulson's lack of affinity with chess and his lack of experience in organizing chess events, but this didn't stop the FIDE Board from embracing a deal that gives AGON the rights to the entire World Championship cycle, including the Grand Prix, the World Cup, the Candidates' tournament and the World Championship match. According to Ilyumzhinov, the deal with AGON will yield FIDE between 10-12 million dollars from the coming cycles. On top of that FIDE will continue to take 20 per cent from the prize-funds and a percentage of the profits AGON is expecting to make in the coming four years.

The first big event AGON will run is the Candidates' tournament, which has been announced to take place in London from October 23 to November 13.

Levitov was not the only person with doubts about the deal. Silvio Danailov, the president of the European Chess Union was livid. On behalf of Bulgaria he had made a bid for the Candidates' tournament, and according to him, their bid and the bid from Azerbaijan were the only ones that were made in accordance with the rules. In spite of this, he was informed at the Board meeting that his efforts had been in vain. Believing that FIDE had broken its own rules with the AGON deal, Danailov intends to take the case to the CAS Sports Court in Lausanne.

Which leaves the question whether the representative of Azerbaijan was livid too? No, he wasn't. The Azerbaijani found a solution to a difficult problem: as Levon Aronian declined to play in Baku, they could not have the Candidates' tournament in their own country. But by financing the tournament in London, they obtained the right of the 'local player', so that Teimour Radjabov can take part.

Andrew Paulson must have been delighted to see that raising money in the chess world is a piece of cake.

Some Are More Equal

Everyone is different and if that's true it certainly should hold good for chess players. And even more so for women chess players! At least, that's what one is tempted to think. We're no longer so sure after what happened during the Tata Steel tournament. On one of the free days, three young women went on a shopping spree in Amsterdam. By 'sheer coincidence' Victoria Cmi-

NEW IN CHESS

Desigual models Tania Sachdev, Victoria Cmilyte and Elisabeth Paehtz.

lyte, Elisabeth Paehtz and Tania Sachdev ran into each other in the Desigual store. Now 'desigual' may mean 'unequal' or 'different' in Spanish, but that didn't stop these ladies to buy exactly the same dress and to agree to wear it on the final night!

Secret Weapon

If a chess player is wearing the same clothes every day there are several likely explanations: he may have lost his suitcase on the way to the tournament, he may have brought no other clothes anyway, or he keeps putting on the same clothes out of superstition, as they had served him well in the games he played so far. A famous example of a player being attached to a piece of clothing is Vasily Ivanchuk. The Ukrainian's fondness of his favourite Real Madrid training jacket even drove the organizers in Linares to despair when he started to wear it on stage (and he was quickly asked never to do that again). Therefore, we tried to imagine his sadness when he lost this jacket during the robbery in Brazil at the end of the first leg of the Sao Paulo/Bilbao Grand Slam Final last year, and were surprised when he explained to us in Bilbao that it was no big deal.

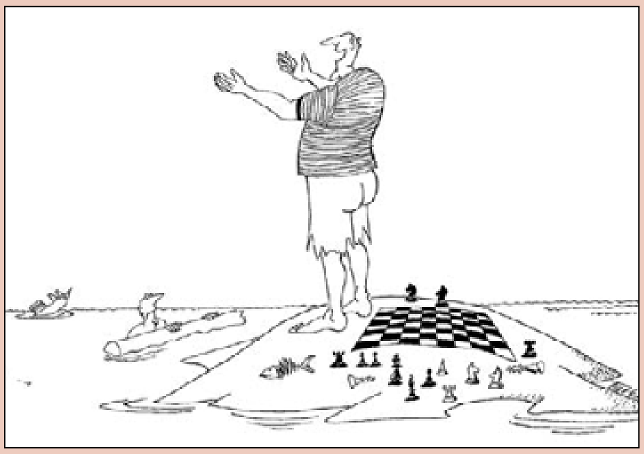
NEW IN CHESS

Vasily 'Real Madrid' Ivanchuk.

But apparently it still is his lucky jacket. When much to our surprise we saw him wear it in the players' hotel in Wijk aan Zee, he confirmed that almost by a miracle it had not been in the suitcase that had been stolen in Brazil. What's more, unknown to the organizers or the arbiters he was wearing it in the playing hall during the Tata Steel tournament almost every day, carefully hidden underneath another more formal jacket! We were not sure of this, but when we expressed our suspicions on the final day, Ivanchuk shrugged, unbuttoned the upper jacket and lo and behold!

Silent Check Mate

Humour is one of those human qualities that defy any definition. What one person finds extremely funny will not even elicit a smile from another. What leaves people rolling around in one country may lead to puzzled looks in another. In Prague, ever-active chess organizer and promoter Pavel Matocha tried to find out what his countrymen find funny by staging a chess cartoon competition in which no fewer than 36 caricaturists took part. It's too late for you to visit the accompanying exhibition to find out what you think of their efforts, but the book, called *Silent Checkmate* is still available.


JAN FARKAS

Bartel Takes to the Skies

This year's Aeroflot Open, as always one of the strongest Opens of the year, moved its venue from the Izmailovo Hotel on the outskirts of Moscow to the more centrally located Cosmos Hotel, where the Moscow Olympiad took place in 1994. Although there were some complaints about rooms that were too warm or too cold, the players generally welcomed the move. Chief arbiter Geurt Gijssen was happy with the excellent playing hall and the absence of any incidents. With the exception of one: having made his 51st move one participant in the lower groups claimed a draw on the basis of the 50-move rule!

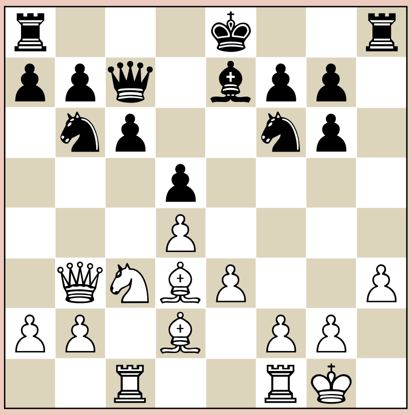
CALLE ERLANDSSON

Mateusz Bartel will play Dortmund.

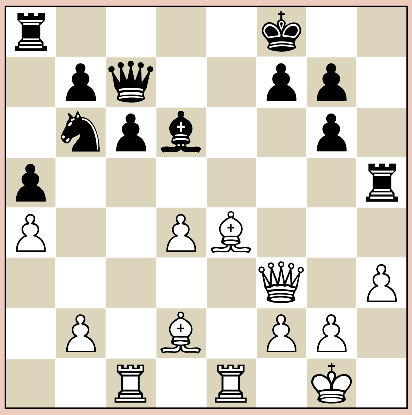
Three players finished with 6½ out of 9: Pavel Eljanov, Anton Korobov and Mateusz Bartel, with the latter winning the event on tie-break as he had played more games with black. Apart from €16,166, Bartel also earned an invitation to the Dortmund elite tournament this summer. Bartel, a professional chess player and the editor of the Polish magazine *Mat*, drew his final two games against Korobov and Eljanov. In Round 7 he won a crucial game against one of the top favourites.

SL 1.6 – D11
Mateusz Bartel
Fabiano Caruana
Moscow Aeroflot Open 2012 (7)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e3 ♗g4 5.♘c3 e6 6.h3 ♗h5 7.♕b3 ♕c7 8.♘h4 ♘bd7 9.♗d2 ♘b6 10.cxd5 exd5 11.♖c1 ♗g6 12.♘xg6 hxg6 13.♗d3 ♗e7 14.0-0



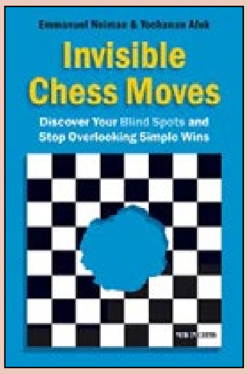
14...♔f8 An ambitious move. Black wants to keep his rook on the h-file. Still, 14...0-0 or 14...a5 may have been preferable. **15.a4 a5 16.e4** The move White was intending to play. **16...dxe4 17.♘xe4 ♖h5 18.♖fe1 ♘xe4** Asking for trouble. Blocking the a2-f7 diagonal with 18...♘bd5 would have been more cautious and prudent. **19.♗xe4 ♗d6** Still, it's understandable that Caruana didn't see the looming danger. He seems to be aiming at the white kingside, and where are White's attacking threats? **20.♕f3**



Here they are! White not only threatens ♗xg6, but also ♗xc6, followed by ♖xc6. Black's position falls apart. **20...♘xa4 21.♗xg6 ♖h8 22.♗g5** And as ♖e7 is only one of the threats, Black resigned.

Invisible Chess Moves

Bartel's 20th move must have come as a cold shower to Caruana. For him the queen manoeuvre, highlighting completely different aspects of the position, must have been an 'invisible chess move' that was suddenly revealed. The phenomenon of the invisible chess move, caused by 'blind spots that obscure some of the best ideas during a game', is described in great detail in Yochanan Afek's and Emmanuel Neiman's *Invisible Chess Moves* (an apt title!). Their book got rave reviews and met with an equally enthusiastic welcome amongst its readers, as became clear during the 2011 Chess Café Book of the Year elections. As the Chess Café website reported: 'After several weeks of voting, one book stood out as the runaway winner. In previous years the voting has been close round-by-round, or one book will do well in the first round, but falter in the second. This year players (predominately from France, Israel and The Netherlands) rallied over-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- Aeroflot 2012

whelmingly around just one title: *Invisible Chess Moves* has been voted the ChessCafe.com 2011 Book of the Year.'

For Blood and for Fun

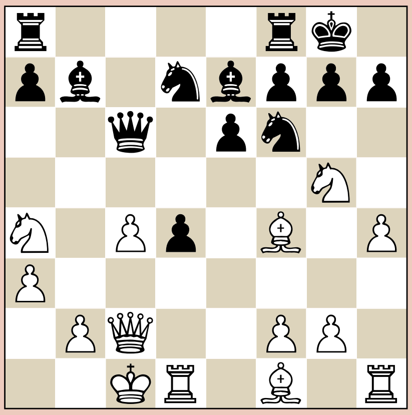
Ireland is not the first country which springs to mind when one thinks of chess, but it has lots of chess clubs, thriving scholastic chess programs and a well-established tournament circuit. Probably the most popular, and certainly the biggest is the Bunratty Chess Festival, near Limerick. Every year the field includes well-known grandmasters, as witness the roll of honour. Peter Svidler, who won in 2008, was so enthusiastic about the atmosphere that he decided to return and win again the next year. This year, new records were set with 232 participants, including 10 GMs. Among these were England's No 1 and No 2 players Michael Adams and Nigel Short, as well as the defending champion Gawain Jones. This trio dominated the tournament, finishing on 5 points out of 6, sharing €1,750 between them. Adams and Short had a better tie-break score, so they played a blitz game for the trophy, which went to Adams.

GERRY GRAHAM

Winner Michael Adams relaxes in the blitz tournament.

QO 1.2 – D37
Simon Williams
Michael Adams
Bunratty 2012 (4)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗e7 The Queen's Gambit Declined is back in fashion and it's not hard to see why – Black gets a solid position and can choose between several reliable systems. **5.♗f4 0-0 6.a3 b6 7.♕c2 c5 8.e3 ♗b7 9.dxc5 bxc5 10.0-0-0** Williams chooses a sharp plan, fitting his playing style. **10...♘bd7 11.h4 ♕b6 12.♘g5 d4** Black could also play 12...e5 13.♘xd5 ♗xd5 14.♖xd5 exf4 15.♖xd7 ♗d6, but Adams prefers a more solid line. **13.exd4 cxd4 14.♘a4 ♕c6**



15.♖xd4? The paradoxical retreat 15.♘f3 would have been much better than the exchange sacrifice that White made in the game. **15...e5 16.♖xd7 ♕xd7 17.♗xe5 ♖fd8** Black could also defend by playing 17...g6, but Adams was prepared to give up the h7-pawn. **18.♗e2** Black also has the better chances after 18.♗xf6 ♗xf6 19.♕xh7+ ♔f8 20.♕c2 ♗d4 21.♗e2, but that would have been the lesser evil. **18...g6 19.♗xf6?** Now this exchange is rather pointless. **19...♗xf6 20.♘c5 ♕c7 21.♘ge4 ♗xe4 22.♘xe4 ♗g7 23.g3 ♖ab8 24.♘c3 ♕c5!** White resigned. ■

GERRY GRAHAM

CJ de Mooi, President of the English Chess Federation, had a good time too.

'Quote, Unquote'

'Is he a skillful political player and policy visionary – a chess master who always sees several moves ahead of his opponents (and of the punditocracy)? Or is he politically clumsy and out of his depth – a pawn overwhelmed by events, at the mercy of a second-rate staff and of the Republicans?'
James Fallows on Barack Obama in *The Atlantic*

'When I was watching the recent film about Bobby Fischer I was thinking, is this going to be me in a few years? I don't think that is going to happen, but it made me think a little that I have to be aware of this at least.'
Magnus Carlsen on *CBS 60 Minutes*

'I wouldn't be too creative. I would invite the eleven best players in the world and my selfish me and try to resurrect the Amber tournament.'
Anish Giri in *Schach*

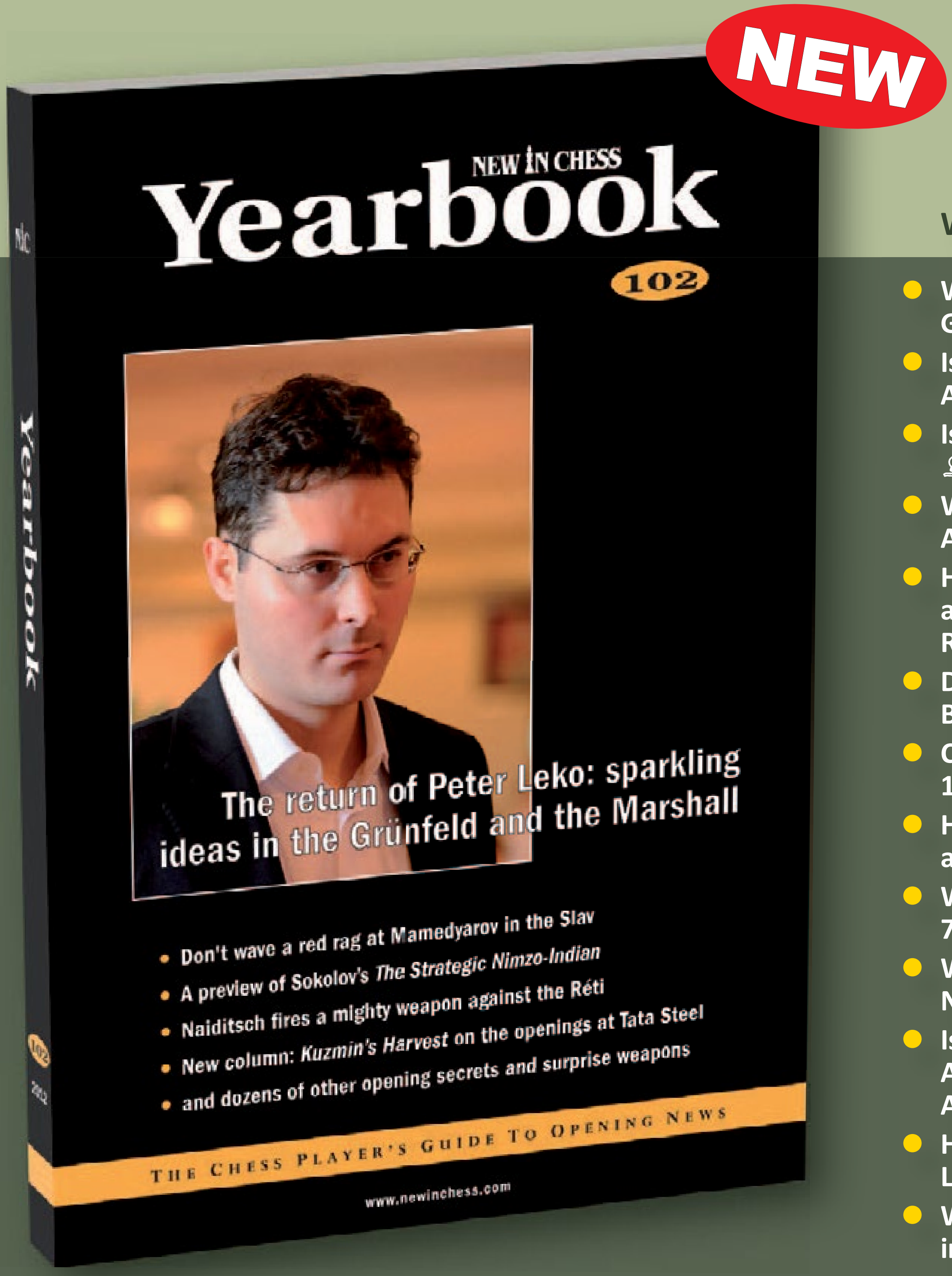
'In Russia they also told me I was the Hungarian Botvinnik. (...) I was forced to say this was a mistake as I had never seen myself as Botvinnik. Of course I have studied all the great players in chess history including Botvinnik, and I knew his play, but that doesn't mean there are any great similarities between our styles.'
Lajos Portisch on *ChessBase*

'You can never get used to losing. Always remains a bad feeling. Sometimes even worse. With my move d4 I became overoptimistic for no reason.'
Judit Polgar on *Twitter* after her loss to Hou Yifan in Gibraltar

'It was a remarkable experience to play against Victor who is 81! He is an inspiration how to love chess forever! Polgar v Korchnoi 1-0.'
Judit Polgar on *Twitter* from Gibraltar three days later

“A terrific value for anyone interested in refurbishing and fine-tuning their opening repertoire.”

ChessToday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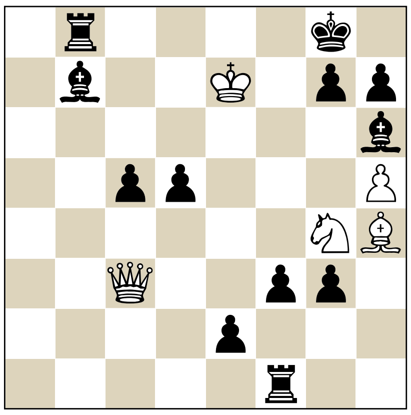
Forcing Variations

Allow me to comment on Charles Hertan's Forcing Moves column in New In Chess 2011/8.



Deschapelles-La Bourdonnais
Paris 1836

'Before making five queens, one should stop to analyse the variations: **1.♘xh6+ gxh6 2.♕h8+! ♔xh8 3.♔f7 ♖f8+ 4.♔xf8 e1♕ 5.♗f6** Mate.'

As the solution says: 'variations' (variations in the plural) and then only one variation is given, I assume that the author also wanted to give the other variation, which is quite interesting as well: 1...♔h8 2.♘f7+ ♔g8 3.♕xg7+! ♔xg7 4.♗f6+ ♔g8 5.♘h6 mate.

Jorgen Fog
Roende, Denmark

Taking New In Chess to Putney Pies

While my family is in India, I have to feed and entertain myself to the best of my ability, so I grabbed New In Chess from my doormat and headed to Putney Pies.

It is painfully cold in London at the moment, and my gloveless hands would much rather have hidden in my pockets than held the protective plastic cover in the frigid night air.

When I arrived at my new favourite restaurant however, a mere two minutes away, I was glad of the company.

For a few months after my last New In Chess column I felt rueful about my decision to stop writing for the magazine, and in various ways I 'missed myself' when I picked it up.

But this issue was excellent and I didn't miss myself at all, if anything the opposite. I say that before analysing the games, in the full knowledge that I never will.

While savouring my crispy deluxe fisherman's pie with abundant glistening spinach, my mind was wonderfully entertained.

China's teenage World Champion made a mature and almost wise impression. I felt strangely glad that she shares my love of light purple and that she would choose to save 'humans' from a fire.

Readers can send their opinions to:
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Nigel's musings about dreams and Freud did not fully convince, but they struck a deep chord. I almost never dreamt of chess until I became a father, and now I often wake up with some disturbing twist on a game. A few nights ago I placed my queen on b7 to check my opponent's king on h1, to which a shadowy faceless opponent responded by wagging his finger at me, and capturing en passant from e5 to d6. I felt desperate and wanted to howl in protest, but in REM sleep your body is completely still. Even after waking, the helplessness stays in your soul.

The funniest and perhaps most revealing thing I read was Kramnik's comment on his decision to play 30...♖e6!? against Luke McShane. In effect, the former World Champion said that he was fed up of being surprised by Luke's moves, and didn't care how good his chosen move was, as long as Luke got a taste of his own medicine, and the psychological tables were turned (which they were).

Unlike most London restaurants, where desserts are more than you need or want to pay for, Putney Pies offered one scoop of deluxe ginger ice-cream for £1.35.

The waiter gave an extra scoop for free, with a strawberry for good measure, and I lapped it up while reading Luke's thoughts on chess, mathematics and beauty.

I identified with the argument that chess problems, for all their delights, are fundamentally trivial. Indeed one of the main reasons I am playing less these days is that the game lost its weight in my mind.

Chess no longer seems important, but it remains extremely interesting, and though it may never again feel meaningful, it will always be beautiful.

I returned home fortified in body and mind, and with frozen hands I placed the magazine next to the others on the shelf, with gratitude.

Jonathan Rowson
London, UK

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Passing on the tradition

Юрий Авербах
ЧТО НАДО ЗНАТЬ ОБ ЭНДШПИЛЕ

Yuri Averbakh

On February 8, Yuri Averbakh, the oldest grandmaster in the world, celebrated his 90th birthday. Between receptions and dinners spread over several days, the grand old man led a training session in the Chigorin room of the Central Chess Club. Watched by the founder of the Russian chess school on the wall, aspiring youngsters worked on endings. At the conclusion of the session all the kids received a signed copy of Averbakh's book What You Should Know About the Endgame. Having noticed that the girls were less interested in the combative nature of the game, Averbakh pointed out that you can also see chess as a theatre. As a true pedagogue he didn't forget to mention that in this theatre you can both see comedy and tragedy!

CALLE ERLANDSSON

NEW IN CHESS

In a jovial mood, rivals Magnus Carlsen and Levon Aronian exchanged jokes at the opening ceremony of the Tata Steel tournament. The numbers one and two in the world rankings arrived in Wijk aan Zee in high spirits, well rested from sunny vacations in Egypt and Asia, and highly motivated to leave their mark on the 74th edition of the finest chess festival in the world. Carlsen dealt the first blows, but in the end he could not keep up with Aronian, who showed great resilience and played amazing chess. As last year's victor Hikaru Nakamura phrased it: 'Levon played the best from start to finish and is the deserved winner. He was a bit unlucky perhaps to finish on only plus-5. If it weren't for a couple of letdowns, he could have easily finished on plus-7, maybe even plus-8.'

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

Aronian has the last laugh

Carlsen and Aronian were not the only ones in a good mood in the Chess Pavilion, where as per tradition the players were welcomed and the drawing of lots took place on the day before the first round. When so many great players gather and so many old friends meet again, a tingling sense of anticipation is easily felt. Seven players from the world top 10 were present, and various who have been in that position or soon will be. The Dutch guests pinned their hopes on Anish Giri, fresh from his win in Reggio Emilia, or speculated about Loek van Wely's comeback after a sabbatical year in which he played more than most of his countrymen. Veselin Topalov really took a long break in 2011 and his form was an interesting topic for discussion, too. The top two Americans could be seen, Hikaru Nakamura and Gata Kamsky, carefully avoiding each other now that they are no longer friends. Others happily greeted each other, delighted to be part of this annual chess highlight in Chess City, as Aronian dubbed the small coastal village that over the past decades has become a household name in every corner of the chess world.

At the same time there were worries. Officially the tournament has been guaranteed until 2013, but how waterproof are guarantees in times of deep economic crisis? None of the organizers dared to confirm anything about next year's tournament, let alone its further future. Some hope could be drawn from the opening speeches, which not only centred on the fragile economy, but also on the immense significance of the chess tournament for Wijk aan Zee. Still, it was only on the last day that the reassuring news was finally broken that everyone had been waiting for. Next year, the 75th Tata Steel jubilee tournament will be staged and the dates were announced. However, what will happen next remains anyone's guess.

If the 75th tournament will be at least as festive and memorable as the 74th edition, you can only hope that the men and women who take the ultimate decision will pay Wijk aan Zee a visit to see and feel its impact. To begin with the organizing committee can send them evidence of the extraordinary press coverage this year. After the first week Anish Giri even decided to decline any further interview requests, kindly explaining that excursions to television studios are not the ideal way to spend your evening if there's another game the next day.

In the second weekend Wijk aan Zee was literally flooded by press representatives and hordes of curious men, women and children. Unfortunately this invasion had nothing to do with the chess tournament. As if they'd never seen a ship before, thousands flocked to the coast to watch a Philippine freighter that was stranded at a stone's throw from the players' hotel. The interest was such that several commuting participants in the amateur groups even lost their games on time when they got stuck in the traffic jams on the one road from Beverwijk to Wijk aan Zee.

Each day there was so much happening that it was a feast to immerse yourself in everything that makes 'Wijk aan Zee' so special. Between walks on the beach, bowls of pea-soup and late-night dinners with the other regulars, there was an abundance of captivating chess. Perhaps the most memorable round I have seen in years was Round 11, which offered enough drama, unexpected turns, reversals of fortune and mind-boggling chess for a book.

When the round started, many actually felt that the tournament had already been decided. In Round 10, Levon Aronian had produced a true masterpiece against Anish Giri and taken a most comfortable lead. The only player still in sight was Vasily

NEW IN CHESS

Good to be back. Veselin Topalov, who played very little in 2011, has a chat with Jan Timman before the round starts.

Ivanchuk, who was a full point behind. The Ukrainian sphinx looked more concentrated than ever. Hardly talking to anybody he walked around lost in his own thoughts and from the occasional words that he spoke it was clear that most of these thoughts were on chess or chess. How eager he was to do well was illustrated by the show he put up after he had only managed a draw against Van Wely in Round 4. First he remained seated at the board, grabbing his hair, groaning audibly and throwing his hands up in the air in seeming despair. When he finally left the stage he angrily kicked a door. No one doubted that Ivanchuk was capable of anything, but one full point with three rounds to go was a lot.

NEW IN CHESS

In the second weekend the cafes and restaurants in Wijk aan Zee did even better business when thousands of people flocked to the beach to watch a stranded freighter.

For Magnus Carlsen and Teimour Radjabov the gap was even one and a half points. That seemed an awful lot, especially seeing the form Aronian was in. True, he had lost the direct confrontation with Carlsen in Round 3, but for the rest he was playing with astonishing ease and his win against Giri had already been his sixth(!) win.

What's more, in Round 11 he played with the white pieces against David Navara, who so far had mainly been suffering, losing five games and only drawing the rest. What Aronian did not know is that that morning Navara had told his second Vlastimil Jansa that for the first time since he arrived in Wijk aan Zee he had slept really well. This freshness was most welcome when his opponent misplayed the opening and it gradually became clear that Navara was on his way to his first victory. Aronian defended with all his might, but after 60 moves Navara scored a win that brought such relief that he even allowed himself a glass of red wine during dinner.

Remarkably, most spectators were only following this sensation in the corner of their eye. The centre of attention was the crazy melee in the game between Magnus Carlsen and Veselin Topalov. Things rapidly spun out of control when in the opening the Norwegian dropped a pawn with an oversight that would make an 1800-player blush. As Carlsen said afterwards: 'Immediately after I made my move I saw that he could take the pawn, of course. But then after the initial shock I started to calculate and I got very excited. I thought that I was going to create a masterpiece and (with a grin) I was going to lie afterwards and going to say that I had seen everything.'

Fortunately for him it was a position where it was virtually impossible to see everything. While Carlsen threw everything but the kitchen sink at Topalov's king, the engines showed miraculous defensive manoeuvres with which Black could win. Many of them were so baffling that the Bulgarian could be forgiven for not spotting them. In the mine-field that he was in it was very easy to make one wrong step and when he did he ended up in an ending that Carlsen converted mercilessly. In the process he reduced the difference with Aronian to a mere half point. He wasn't the only one to do so. Teimour Radjabov also won, grinding down his compatriot Vugar Gashimov with the black pieces.

And there was even more good news for Carlsen and Radjabov. Vasily Ivanchuk seemed to have good prospects when he sat down to play Boris Gelfand, but despite the advantage of the white pieces he didn't even come close and suffered a bitter defeat. For Gelfand this win was one of the few moments that offered some consolation in an otherwise poor performance. Unfortunately, it was a short-lived moment of relief, as he was going to lose his two remaining games in encounters that had considerable influence on the outcome of the tournament. The challenger of World Champion Vishy Anand was at a loss why his play lacked punch, as he had seriously prepared for the tournament and wanted to do well. In the end he could not come up with a better solution than that apparently the upcoming match played tricks with his psyche, no matter how hard he tried to avoid this.

Another player who was happy with the outcome of Round 11 was Fabiano Caruana. The Italian grandmaster defeated Anish Giri in a creatively conducted attacking game. After an encouraging first half Giri collapsed in the final rounds, even losing five games in a row. After his win in Reggio this setback on home-ground was

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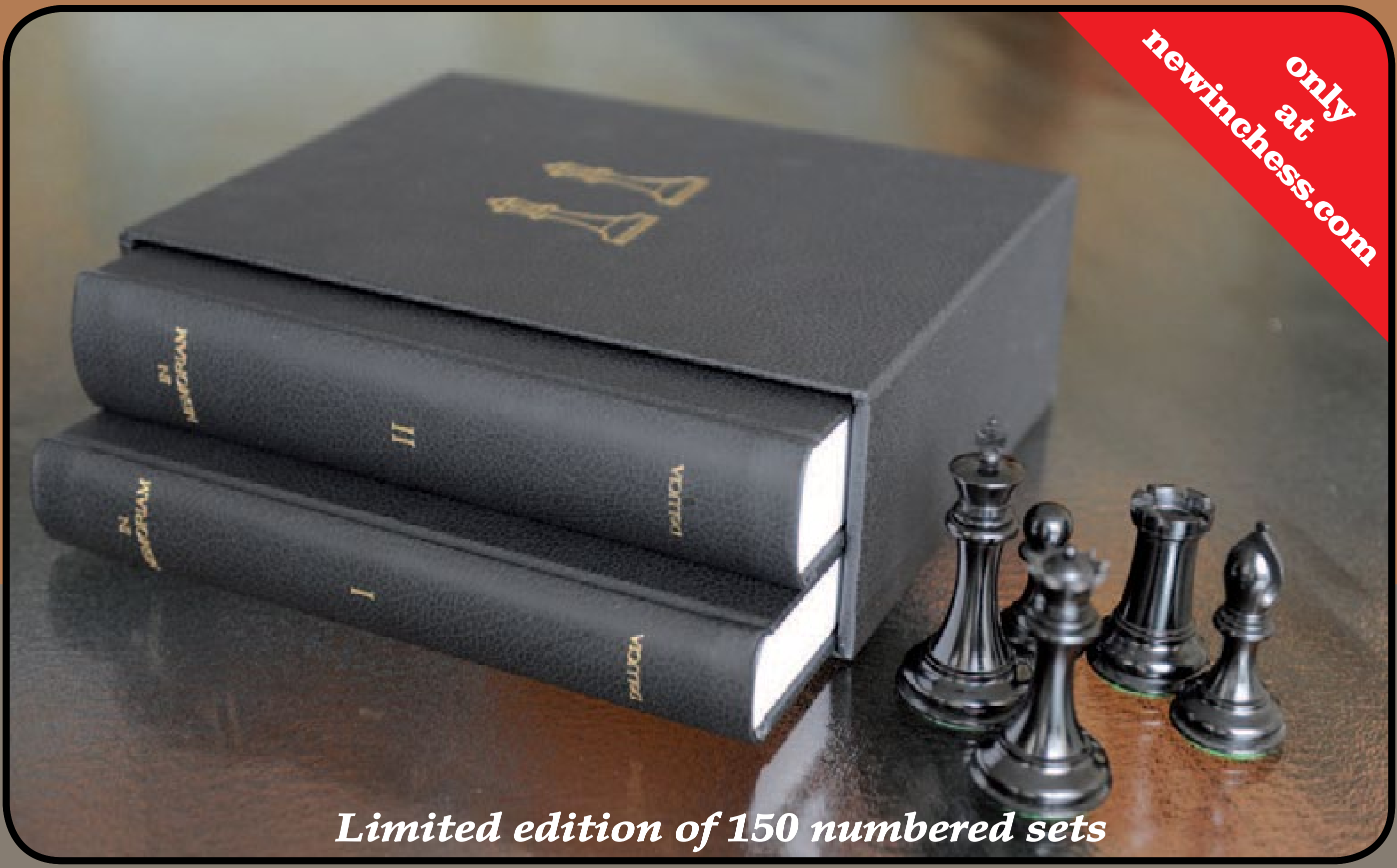

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disappointing, but the young Dutchman preferred to look at it philosophically, hoping to draw some lessons from what had happened.

Caruana had only been mildly happy with his shared second place in Reggio, but with an Elo-gain that took him into the world's top 10, he may safely be called the revelation of the Tata Steel tournament. As Carlsen put it unreservedly: 'I'd like to mention that I am really impressed by Caruana's play. I think he has taken huge steps. When I watched him play last year in Biel for example, I thought, well, this guy is not going to be a threat in Wijk aan Zee or next year. But he made plus three and even had chances for more. That's really impressive.' In the final two rounds Caruana first narrowly survived a precarious position against Navara and then outplayed Gelfand in a drawish ending to finish in shared second place.

The last decisive game in Round 11 was Loek van Wely's loss as White against Sergey Karjakin. It was Van Wely's first loss after ten(!) consecutive draws. For his return to the highest level the only under-2700 participant (lacking 8 points) had prepared openings that should take his opponents into unknown territory. Generally speaking his strategy, designed in close cooperation with Dutch IM Jan van de Mortel, a chess coach based in Chicago, worked well, but at a number of crucial moments his play lacked aggression. Karjakin, on the other hand, seemed to have forgotten what a draw is! From his first ten games he only drew one, while he won four and lost five, a most remarkable series for a top-10 player.

NEW IN CHESS

Chess everywhere. If you want to play in one of the many amateur tournaments, you have to register months in advance.

Following this turbulent round that totally shook up the field, the tension evaporated with unexpected suddenness when Aronian hit back with another win in Round 12 and both his rivals failed to keep up with him. Carlsen even had to work hard to make a draw with white against Kamsky after another uncharacteristic oversight in the opening, while Radjabov puzzled friend and foe by offering Ivanchuk a draw after 20 moves in a much better position. His excuse was that he had already spent one hour more on the clock than his opponent and that he felt that it would be unwise to go all out for a win.

In the meantime Aronian got the better of Gelfand in a full-blown fight. Perhaps the crucial moment came when Aronian, as Black, offered a pawn that his opponent didn't dare to take. The engines suggested that White had little reason to spurn the gift, but Aronian understood his opponent's reluctance. Calling it a 'Marshallian thing', he pointed out that Black indeed loses one or a couple of pawns, but that in return his pieces come to life and White's king comes under attack. After Gelfand had declined the offer, a gritty struggle ensued in which Aronian obtained the initiative. Under mounting pressure Gelfand blundered and Aronian entered the last round a full point ahead of Carlsen and Radjabov.

Carlsen no longer was master of his own chances ('Yeah, usually I am there to strike instead of being one of the many lame ducks at the end.'). Only if Radjabov defeated Aronian, he could still tie for first (if he himself beat Van Wely with black – which in the end he didn't do either).

Given the situation, Aronian-Radjabov indeed looked like a dream pairing. The tournament would remain exciting till the very last moment! At least, that would have been a possibility if Radjabov had not offered a draw after 12 moves... His decision not to fight was puzzling and caused considerable confusion, especially after he had not fought for his chances to win the tournament one day earlier against Ivanchuk either. This time Radjabov, the only player to finish the tournament unbeaten, explained that he had been puzzled too! 'I thought Aronian would be playing for the number one spot in the world rankings and that he would try to push. But he decided that victory in the tournament is more important than fighting for the first spot, which of course is up to him. In a complicated game I would have looked for my chances, but he decided to go for the g3 lines, and in these lines normally Black is playing to equalize. Or you have to play sharper, but I didn't have the energy and the time to evaluate the risk. When he chose this set-up I understood that he wanted a draw, of which I was not sure before the game. At that point it was already too late for me to do anything. I think we were both puzzled.'

Yes, Aronian was also puzzled, but more than that he couldn't care less! For after tying for first in Wijk aan Zee in 2007 (with Radjabov(!) and Topalov) and 2008 (with Carlsen), he was finally the sole winner of the Tata Steel Chess Tournament!

NOTES BY
Levon Aronian

QO 1.5 – D37
Anish Giri
Levon Aronian
Wijk aan Zee 2012 (10)

Before this game I had played Anish only once. In the European Team Championship in 2011 I managed to win a good game against him.

1.d4 d5

On the advice of my wise friend Hao I decided for a time to switch to the Queen's Gambit.

2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗e7 4.♘f3

4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗f4 usually leads to sharper play.

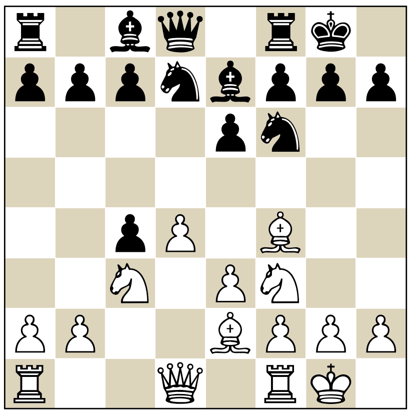
4...♘f6 5.♗f4 0-0 6.e3 ♘bd7

In recent times a couple of new ideas have emerged in this position.

7.♗e2

The other new line 7.♕c2 c5 8.♖d1 also leads to an interesting game.

7...dxc4 8.0-0



This comparatively new idea is one that I devised and employed for the first time against Anand in the Tal Memorial in 2011. It was rather strange to be fighting against my own weapon.

8...♘b6

I decided to choose a variation which apparently is not so good, hoping that Anish would not be familiar with it.

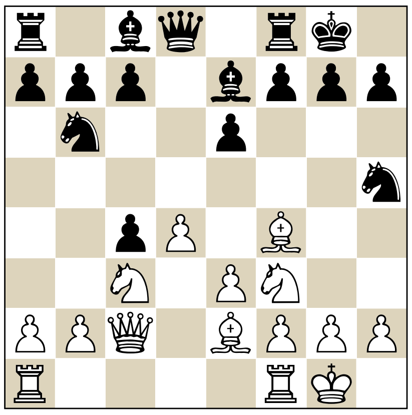
9.♕c2

This move followed immediately. In the depths of my heart I was hoping to obtain a variation examined by Arman Pashikian where Black sacrifices the exchange.

Instead of this move White has a wide choice. A complicated battle arises in the event of the possible 9.e4 c5 (9...♘e8 with the idea of supporting the c4-pawn comes into consideration) 10.dxc5 ♗xc5 11.♕c2.

9...♘h5

This is the critical move. After 9...♘fd5 10.♗g3 with his next move White plays ♘e5 and retains slight pressure.



10.♗e5

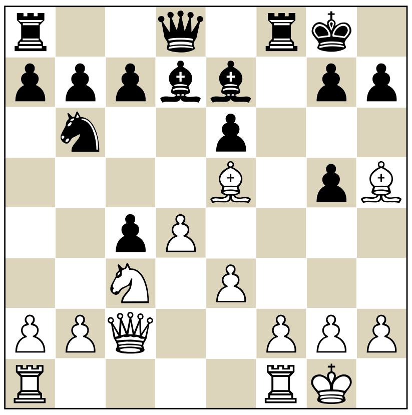
Both now and on the next move ♗g3 gives White a sound position, but in this way he cannot fight for any tangible advantage.

10...f6 11.♘g5 fxg5 12.♗xh5

By this exchange White has broken Black's pawn structure. In return the extra pawn on c4 has remained fully intact.

12...♗d7

In our analysis Arman and I thought that the possible move 12...♗d6 was too modest.

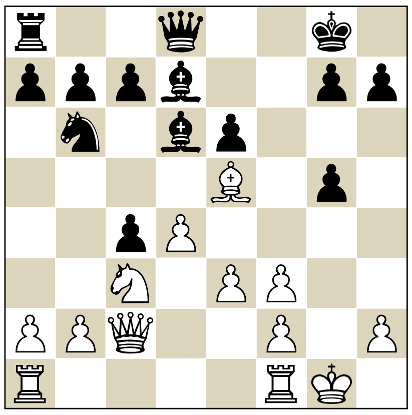


13.♗f3

This move is important for the assessment of the entire 8...♘b6 variation. 13.♗g4 would have led to very complicated play.

13...♖xf3 14.gxf3 ♗d6

Analysing this position during the Tal Memorial in 2011, Arman Pashikian considered it to be a pleasant one for Black to play. Black's play is simple, whereas White has to think how to activate his rooks.



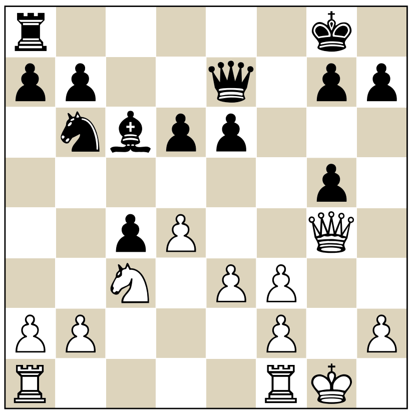
15.♕e4

It seems to me that the queen manoeuvre to g4 does not improve White's position and merely gives Black tempi for the development of his initiative. I would have preferred to retreat the bishop to g3, place the knight on e4 and exchange the c4-pawn by b3. In this case White's position would have had its plus points.

15...♗c6 16.♕g4 ♕e7 17.♗xd6

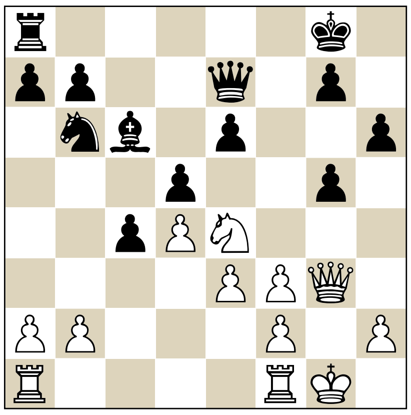
If 17.♘e4 I was intending to continue 17...h6. White cannot keep his bishop on e5 for long, since after 18...♗xe5 19.dxe5 ♘d7 the e5-pawn becomes very weak.

17...cxd6

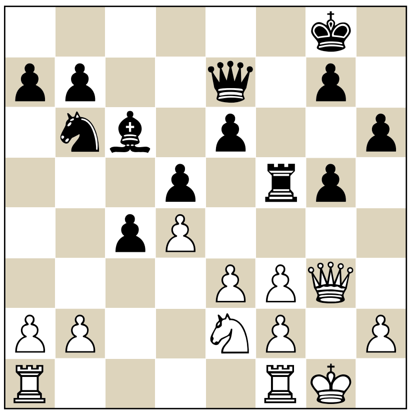


18.♘e4 I think that White could have maintained the dynamic balance by 18.e4 with the idea of playing a rook to e3. After failing to find this idea, Anish began playing without any particular plan.

18...h6 19.♕g3
It would appear that with this move White achieves the blunting of the bishop on c6, but as Botvinnik demonstrated many times, this bishop always finds an application for itself.
19...d5



20.♘c3
This move indicates that my opponent was already upset by the course of the game. It looks very dangerous to play 20.♘c5, since the knight ends up in a restricted position, but in the given instance this was necessary. After 20...♖f8 21.b3 White is still in the game.
20...♖f8
Now White's position lacks any active ideas.
21.♘e2 ♖f5
Preventing the f4 advance, just in case.



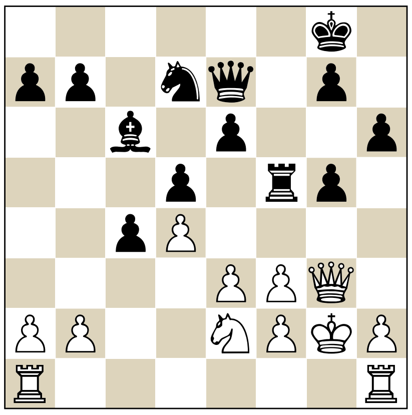
22.♔g2
If 22.♕b8+, apart from other moves Black has the curious resource 22...♘c8.
22...♘d7
Not the only move in the position, but the most competent. When the opponent is cramped, prophylaxis sometimes proves stronger than tactical blows.

Anish Giri
TATA
Levon Aronian

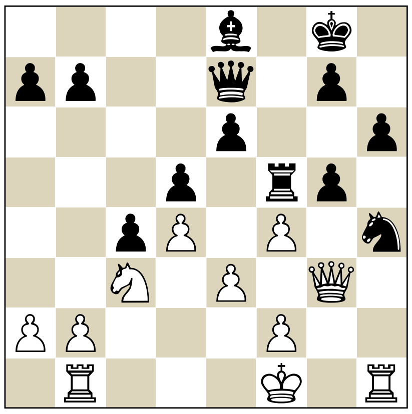
NEW IN CHESS

Levon Aronian brilliantly defeated Anish Giri: 'The fact that the game did not conclude before the 40th move is merely an indication of my lack of haste.'

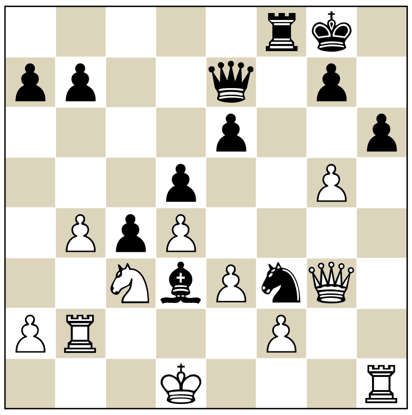
23.♖h1
After this mistake it can be confidently said that Black has a won position. 23.b3 was more resilient.



23...♘f8 The knight heads for h4, after which White will not have to suffer for long.
24.h4 Desperation. **24...♘g6**
Of course, the rest does not require any commentary. The fact that the game did not conclude before the 40th move is merely an indication of my lack of haste.
25.f4 ♘xh4+ 26.♔f1
In this situation many moves lead to a win, but I wanted to play without calculating variations.
26...♕b4 27.♖b1 ♗e8
Here I decided to switch my bishop to d3 via g6. 27...♗a4 would have won more quickly.
28.♘c3 ♕e7
The queen is transferred to f6. At the same time the threat of advancing the queenside pawns by ...b5 is created.



29.b4 ♖f8 30.♖b2 ♗g6 31.♔e1
Trying to slip away with the king to the queenside.
31...♗d3 32.fxg5 ♘f3+ 33.♔d1



33...hxg5
Of course, it was possible to exchange the queens, but I wanted to conclude the game with an attack.
34.♕h3 ♕f6 35.♔c1
White's position would appear to have improved, but this impression is deceptive. After thinking a little I decided to expose White's weaknesses by playing ...e5.

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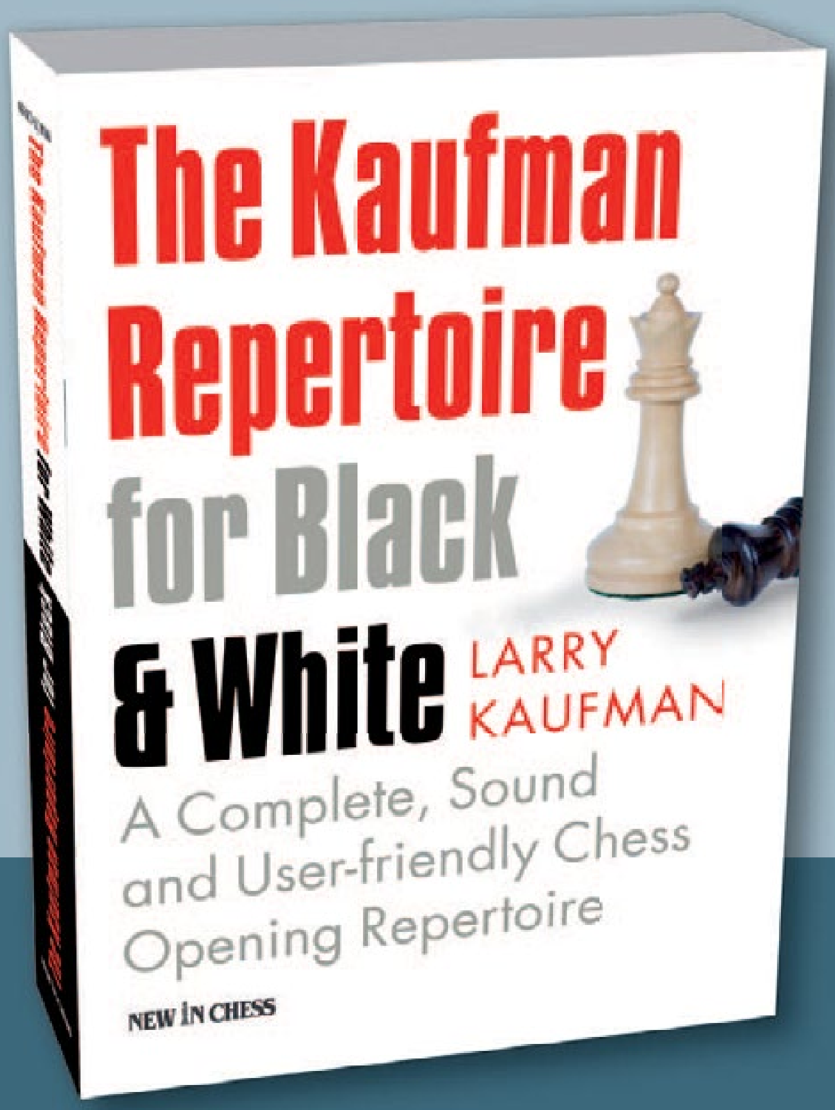
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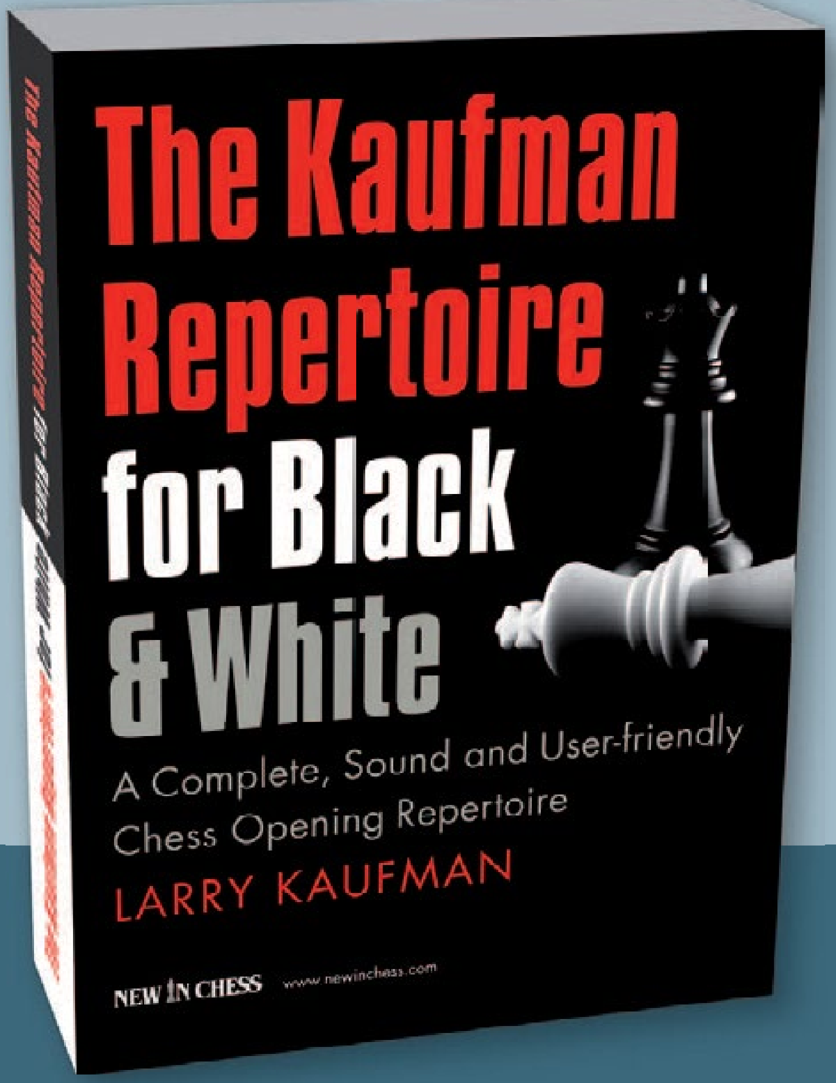
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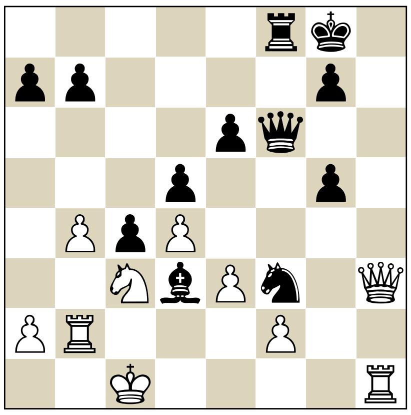
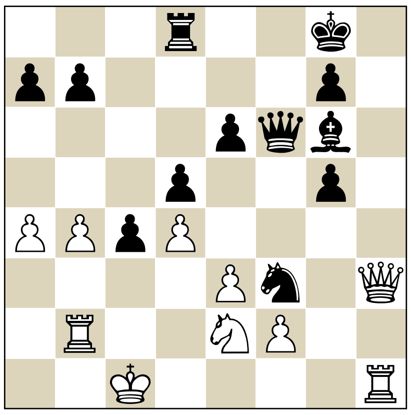
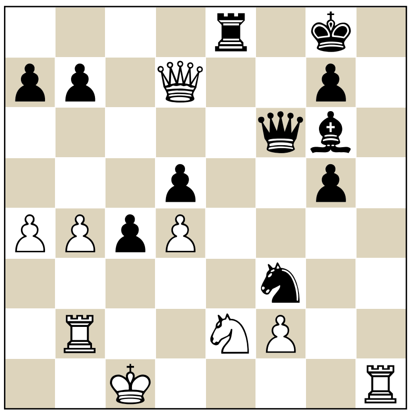


35...♗g6 It was also possible to begin with 35...♖d8.
36.a4 If 36.b5, then 36...♕e7 with the idea of ...♕a3 is very unpleasant.
36...♖d8 37.♘e2



37...e5 After the exchange on d4 White will have to take with the pawn, so as not to allow the knight to go to d3. **38.♕g4 exd4 39.exd4 ♖e8 40.♕d7** This allows a pretty finish.

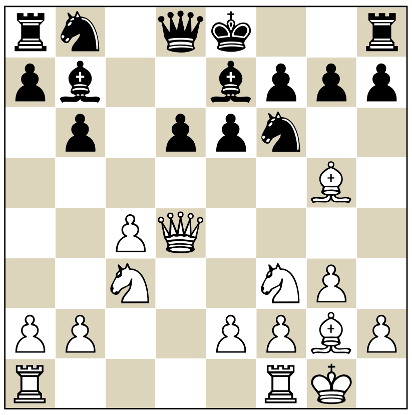


40...c3 41.♖a2 If 41.♖c2 the easiest way to win is 41...♖d8. **41...♘e1 42.♖xe1** After 42.♖h3 ♕xf2 43.♘xc3 ♕f4+ 44.♔d1 ♘c2 White loses much material. **42...♕f4+ 43.♔d1 ♕e4** Since after 44.♕xe8+ ♗xe8 White loses at least a rook, and other moves lead to mate, my opponent resigned.

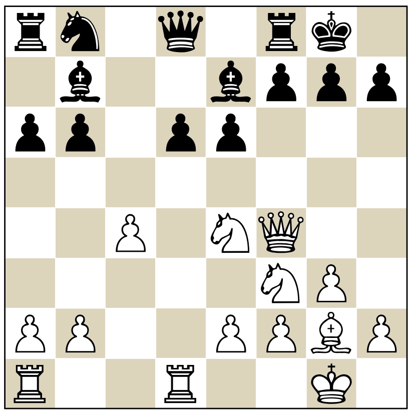
NOTES BY
Magnus Carlsen

EO 40.1 – A30
Magnus Carlsen
Vugar Gashimov
Wijk aan Zee 2012 (1)

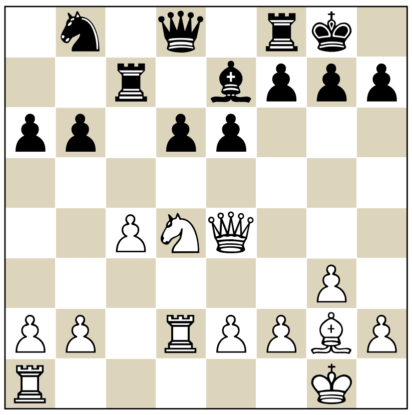
I decided to annotate the game against Gashimov. My games against Aronian and Topalov that I won (I've yet to annotate a game I haven't won, for different reasons) were arguably more interesting, but I like this one better.
1.♘f3
Before the game, I had asked my father to name a letter from a to h, and since the other moves to the f-file are not particularly inviting, it had to be this one.
1...♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.♘c3 e6 4.g3 b6 5.♗g2 ♗b7 6.0-0 ♗e7 7.d4 cxd4 8.♕xd4 d6 9.♗g5



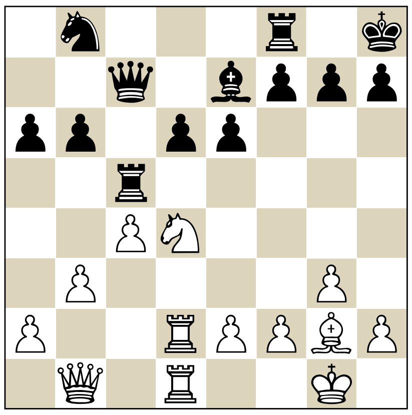
I had sort of expected him to go for the Hedgehog, and I was curious to see what he would do against the good old Andersson line in which White frequently manages to get a small but stable advantage.
9...a6 10.♗xf6 ♗xf6 11.♕f4 0-0 12.♖fd1 ♗e7 13.♘e4



This is the point; Black has to give up his light-squared bishop.
13...♗xe4 14.♕xe4 ♖a7 15.♘d4 ♖c7 16.♖d2



This has all been seen many times before, but here I suddenly got the idea that I might be able to defer playing b3 until later. But I'd say it probably shouldn't make a lot of difference.
16...♖c5
16...♖xc4 17.♘xe6 ♖xe4 18.♘xd8 ♖c4 19.♘b7 is obviously very good for White, as d6 is dropping.
17.♖ad1 ♕c7 18.b3 ♔h8
18...b5 was a way to try and exploit the fact that White hasn't gotten in a4 yet: 19.cxb5 axb5 20.b4 ♖c4 21.a3 d5 22.♕e3, and thanks to some tactical tricks, most notably 22...♕b6 23.♗xd5, White keeps the initiative.
19.♕b1



Now, however, we get a typical position. White will try to expand on the queenside, and ideally put a knight on c6.
19...♘d7 20.e3 ♕c8 21.♖c2 ♖c7 22.a4 ♖d8 23.♕a2
White has completed his plan (which I would have been quite proud of finding incidentally if it had not already

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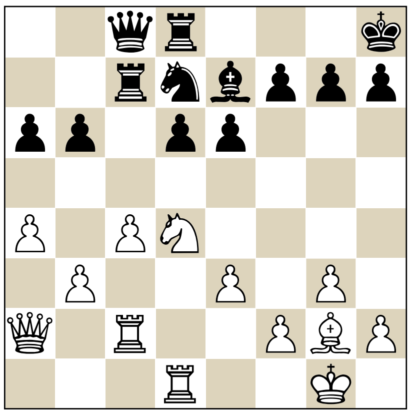
been played by Andersson 30 years ago), and if I were to manage to get in b4-b5 now, I would have a serious advantage.



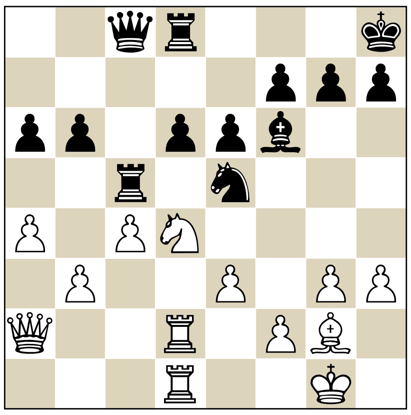
23...♘e5

Stopping b4, but nevertheless not solving his problems.

24.h3?! 24.a5 was quite strong here. I naturally considered this, but I thought that Black could reply 24...bxa5 25.♕xa5 d5, with an excellent game. However, the simple 26.♖dc1 leaves White well on top, thanks to the trick 26...♖c5 27.cxd5!, which is what I had missed (after other moves Black is more than fine).

24...♗f6 Now, however, we resume the unhurried manoeuvring.

25.♖cd2 ♖c5



26.f4 I was very uncertain about this one, but I thought it was worth chasing the knight to a bad square, even at the cost of slightly weakening my own position.

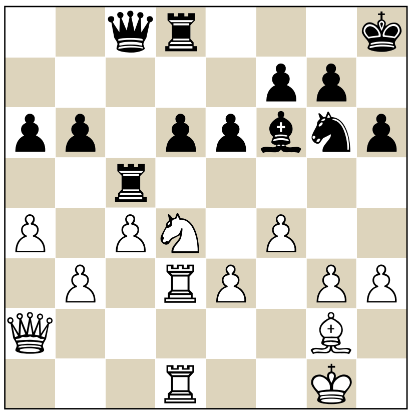
26...♘g6

26...♘d7 would be desirable, but fails to 27.♘c6 ♖xc6 28.♗xc6 ♕xc6 29.♖xd6 ♕f3 30.♕f2 ♕b7 31.♕g2 ♕c7 32.♕d2, and the pin on the d-file will be Black's downfall.

27.♖d3

I thought the queen might find some useful work on the second rank.

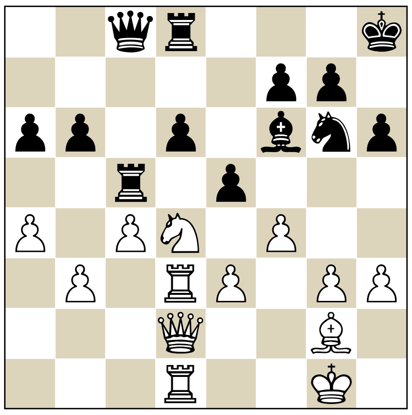
27...h6



This eventually led to an ugly weakening of the dark squares, but that was rather hard to foresee at this point, and the black king needs an escape hatch, just in case.

28.♕d2 e5

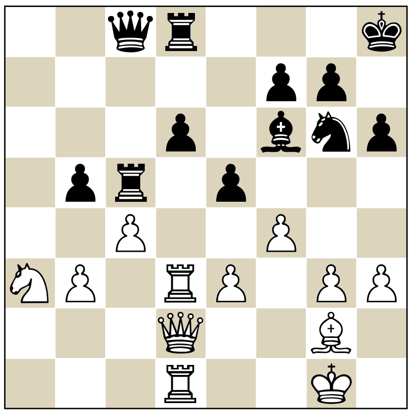
Gashimov decides not to wait any longer and tries to free his game. This break was made possible by the fact that I had weakened my position with f4, giving Black some counterchances.



29.♘c2!

Much stronger than 29.♘e2 b5, with good counterplay for Black.

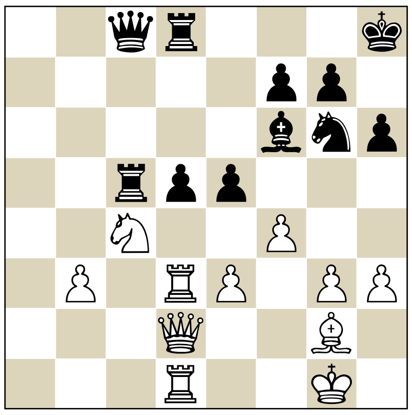
29...b5 30.axb5 axb5 31.♘a3



This is what I had been counting on. I reckoned that White would have a huge advantage with the knight coming to c4. However, around this point I realized that it wasn't all that simple.

31...bxc4 32.♘xc4 d5

The point; otherwise the d6-pawn falls and Black has a miserable position.



33.♗xd5

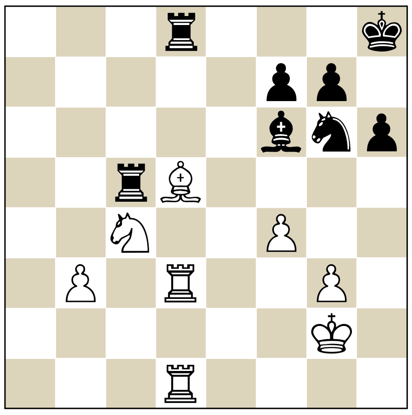
After some thought I settled on this, which at least gives White a lasting and risk-free advantage.

33.♘b6 ♕e6, with the point of 34.♘xd5 (34.♖xd5 ♖cxd5 35.♘xd5 ♘e7 also leaves White with very few winning chances, as Black gets to exchange his bad knight) 34...e4 is what I had missed. Surprisingly, at least to me, Black wins material.

33...♕xh3 34.♕g2 ♕xg2+

Black has to exchange queens to save his f7-pawn.

35.♔xg2 exf4 36.exf4



The material is sharply reduced, and there are opposite-coloured bishops on the board, but as has often been shown in practice, that doesn't always guarantee a draw. Here, White has some concrete advantages: his minor pieces are much more active

Inspired by Ulf Andersson, Magnus Carlsen played his best game against Vugar Gashimov.

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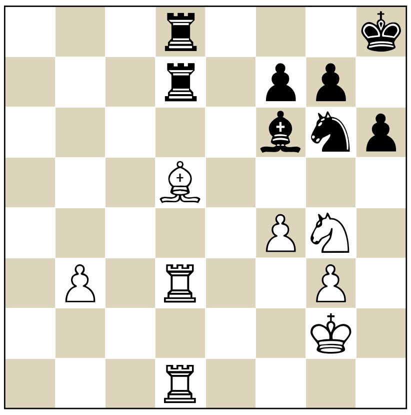
than their black counterparts, and the passed b-pawn is potentially very dangerous. Additionally, the f7-pawn needs protection.

36...♖c7 37.♘e3 ♖cd7 38.♘g4

I was very happy to find this manoeuvre. 38.b4 ♘e7 39.b5 ♖d6 leads nowhere, as I don't want to move the bishop and exchange rooks.



38...♗b2?

A serious inaccuracy.

38...♗c3 was much better. Paradoxically, the bishop is less exposed here than on b2, as the game will show: 39.♘f2 f5, and Black keeps excellent drawing chances, as witness the line 40.♗e6 ♖xd3 41.♖xd3 ♖xd3 42.♘xd3, and the bishop is not hanging, so that Black can safely protect the pawn with 42...♘e7.

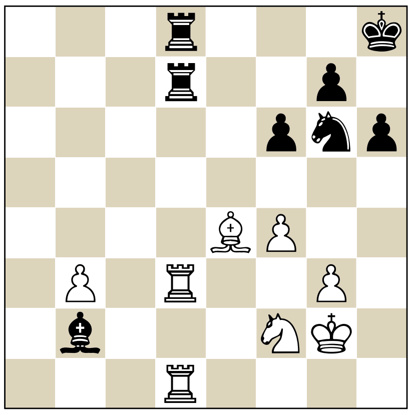
38...♘e7 might be tempting, but leads to a very unfortunate transformation for Black: 39.♘xf6 gxf6 40.♗c4 ♖xd3 41.♖xd3 ♖xd3 42.♗xd3, and with a passed pawn and the stronger minor piece, White should win despite the material equality.

39.♘f2 f6

An ugly move, but probably not a bad one.

39...♖b8 40.♗c4 also leaves Black with an unpleasant position.

40.♗e4



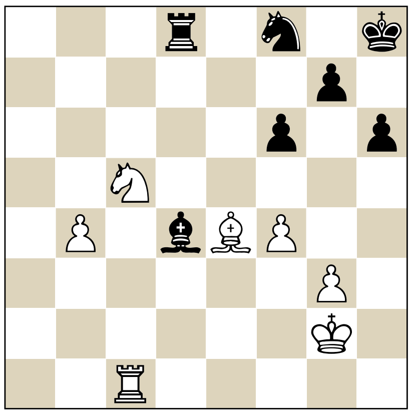
40...♘f8 Absolutely forced. 40...♖xd3 41.♖xd3 ♖xd3 42.♘xd3 leaves two black pieces hanging.

41.b4 Finally, the time has come to advance this pawn.

41...♖xd3 42.♘xd3 ♗c3 43.♖c1 ♗d4

43...♖d4 44.♔f3 ♗xb4 45.♘xb4 ♖xb4 46.♖c8 will cost Black the knight on f8.

44.♘c5

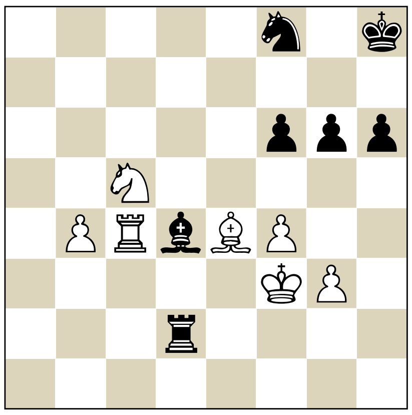


44...♗e3

I was happy to see this one, as I was sure that the plan involving putting a rook on the second rank would lead nowhere.

44...g6 would not have solved Black's problems either due to the clever 45.♖d1 f5 46.♘b7! (46.♗f3 ♗f6 is harmless, of course) 46...♖d7 47.♗c6 ♖c7 48.b5 ♗b6 49.♘d6 and, mainly due to his passive pieces, Black still has a very difficult position.

45.♖c3 ♖d2+ 46.♔f3 ♗d4 47.♖c4 g6



Preparing to weave a mating net, but White has a simple answer.

48.♘d3

Now the threat has been parried and White can launch a counterattack.

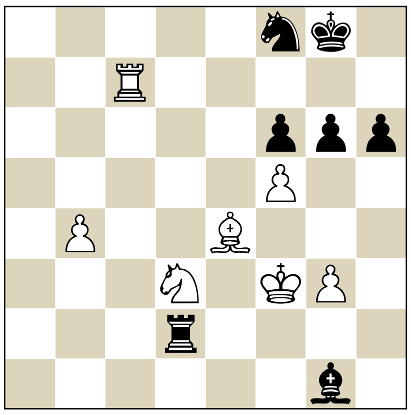
48...♗g1 49.♖c8?

A mistake that seriously complicates my task.

49.♖c1 was correct, with the idea of forcing the black bishop to d4, a square the knight needs: 49...♗d4 50.f5. I rejected this because of 50...gxf5 51.♗xf5 ♘e6, activating the black knight, failing to spot the simple 52.♔e4 ♖e2+ 53.♔d5, and White wins a piece.

49...♔g7 50.♖c7+ ♔g8 51.f5

This was my point, as Black cannot play 51...gxf5 52.♗xf5 ♘e6 now in view of the check on e6. However, Black has another trick, which I had failed to spot.



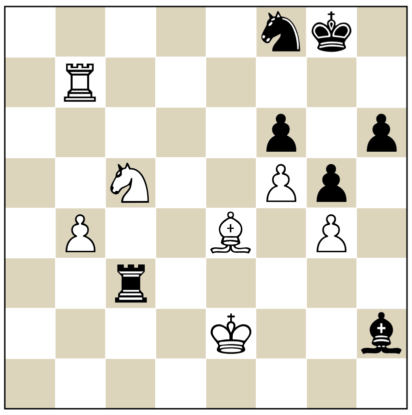
51...g5? Now the black knight is left completely paralysed.

However, 51...h5!! would probably have saved the day: 52.fxg6 ♘e6 53.♖d7 ♘d4+ (53...♘g5+ 54.♔f4 is simple; the white king does not get mated here) 54.♔f4. I finished calculating here, thinking that White was easily winning, but Black continues with 54...♘e2+. This one had escaped my line of vision. Now White has nothing better than 55.♔f5 ♘xg3+ 56.♔f4 ♘xe4 57.♔xe4 h4 58.♔f5 h3 59.♔xf6 ♗b6, and miraculously, Black makes a draw.

52.g4

A very important move. Now the white king will never get into trouble, and I can calmly go about converting my advantage.

52...♗h2 53.♖b7 ♖c2 54.♘c5 ♖c3+ 55.♔e2



55...h5

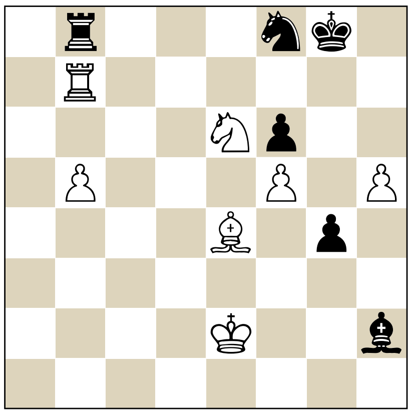
Desperation, but what else to do? 56.♗d5, followed by 57.♘e6, is a threat, and the otherwise desirable 55...♗d6 runs into a nasty fork: 56.♗d5+ ♔h8 57.♘e4.

56.gxh5 g4 57.♘e6 ♖c8 58.b5

My number one priority was to keep the black knight passive, so winning a second pawn with 58.♖g7+ ♔h8 59.♖xg4 ♘d7 was not very tempting.

58...♖b8

The best try, but the endgame is easily winning for White.



59.♖xb8 ♗xb8 60.♗d5

Very accurate. Now 60...♘d7 is not possible, of course, in view of 61.♘c5+.

60...♗a7

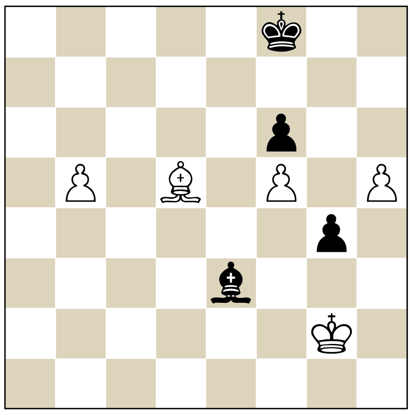
He needs to prevent b6, but now I can simply march the king to g3 and pick up the pawn.

60...♘xe6 61.fxe6 ♔f8 62.h6 f5 63.h7 ♗e5 64.b6 leaves Black with too many passed pawns to handle.

61.♔f1 ♗e3 62.♔g2 ♔f7 63.♘xf8+

The end of a long and interesting journey for this knight (which started on g1 on move 1, 12 knight moves ago –ed.). Finally the time has come to exchange the unfortunate knight on f8. The two passed pawns are too far apart for black to deal with both of them.

63...♔xf8



64.♔g3 ♔e7

64...♔g7 65.♔xg4 ♔h6 66.♗f7 followed by a king march to the queenside, is also quite elementary.

65.♔xg4 ♔d6 66.♔f3

Since Black has to let one of my pawns advance to the sixth rank, the game is over.

66...♗d2 67.b6

Black resigned.

My best game in Wijk aan Zee this year and, apart from the mistake on move 49, a game I'm quite proud of!

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NOTES BY
Teimour Radjabov

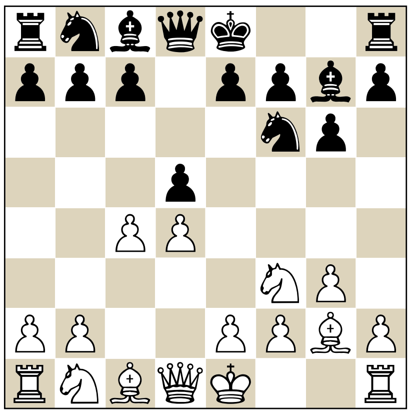
GI 2.2 – D73
Teimour Radjabov
David Navara
Wijk aan Zee 2012 (3)

One of the early rounds and my second game with white in the tournament. After my first white game, against Caruana, which ended in a draw, I was eager to try for more in this one ☺.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘f3 ♗g7 4.g3 d5

One of the main replies in the theory of the g3 systems. Black challenges White in the centre and is going to recapture on d5 with the knight after cxd5.

5.♗g2



The pawn on c4 is hanging – is it a Queen's Gambit with bishops on g2 and g7? Is it a Catalan with Black's bishop on g7? Let's call it a pawn sacrifice in the Grünfeld on move 5.

5...dxc4

Accepted...

6.♘a3

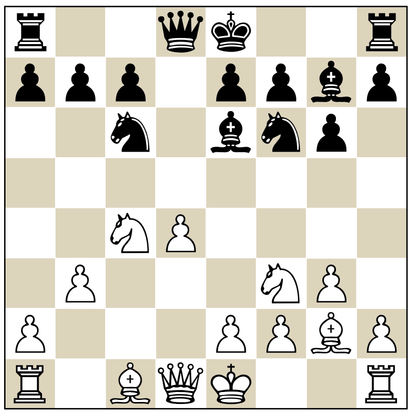
And now we are back on earth. Of course, White is not going to let Black play with a pawn up at such an early stage.

6...♘c6

Black has many alternatives, of course. He can go, say, 6...c5 instead, or 6...0-0 or 6...c3. But David prefers this move and now we are in a less explored theoretical line.

7.♘xc4 ♗e6 8.b3

Took the pawn, defended the knight; all by the rules.

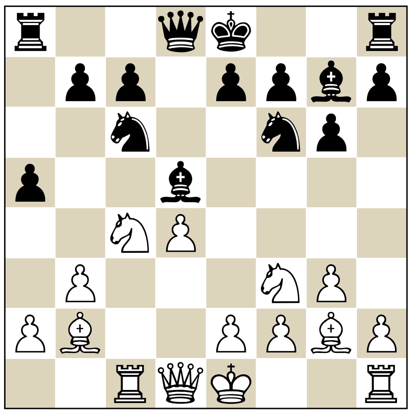


8...a5 Black is going to attack the a2-b3 pawn chain, but he has to watch out for ♘g5!?, as after my next move it becomes a real threat!

9.♗b2 ♗d5 Black prevents 10.♘g5 and is going to play ...a4 next!

After the immediate 9...a4 White takes the initiative with 10.♘g5!?

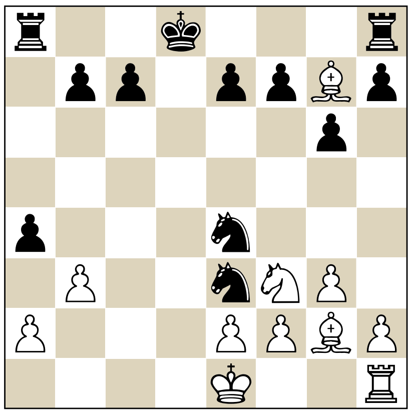
10.♖c1



10...0-0 After 10...a4 play can continue:

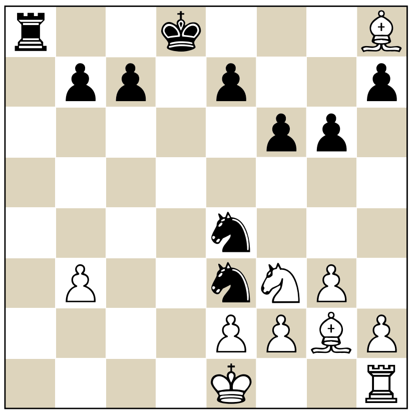
A) 11.bxa4!? ♘d7 12.0-0 0-0 13.e3 ♗xc4 14.♖xc4 ♘b6 15.♖c2, and Black recaptures on a4, but White retains the better prospects due to the bishop pair!

B) 11.♘e3?! ♗e4! 12.d5!? ♘b4 13.♖c4 ♘bxd5 14.♖xe4 ♘xe4 15.♗xg7 ♘xe3 16.♕xd8+ ♔xd8!



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

17.fxe3! (the misguided 17.♗xh8?? could lead to a nice diagram: 17...axb3 18.axb3 – the only move is 18.fxe3, when Black is also better – 18...f6!! – otherwise White is even slightly better.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Now it's mate in three after: 19.♗xf6 exf6 20.♘d2 ♖a1+ 21.♘b1 ♖xb1 mate – a beautiful mating combination!!) 17...axb3 18.axb3 ♖g8! 19.♗d4 c5 20.♘e5 cxd4 21.♗xe4 ♖a1+ 22.♔f2 dxe3+ 23.♔xe3 ♖xh1 24.♗xh1 f6, and I think this endgame is about equal.

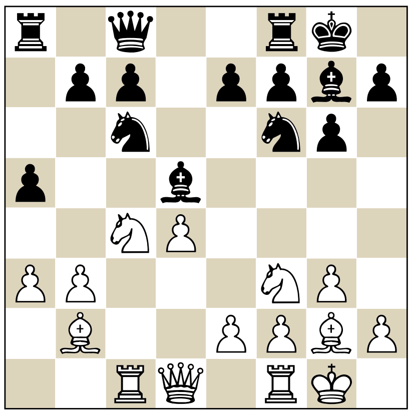
11.a3

11.0-0 is also possible, but I wanted to prevent 11...a4 which is maybe not a threat after all.

11...♕c8

It's problematic to place my pieces now. The knight on c6 is stopping Black from pushing his c-pawn and on the whole it is not that obvious where I should put my pieces.

12.0-0



12...♕e6?

This move, based on a miscalculation, is very bad, as it allows my re-

The Radjabovs confer at the closing dinner: Teimour, his wife Einara and his father Boris.

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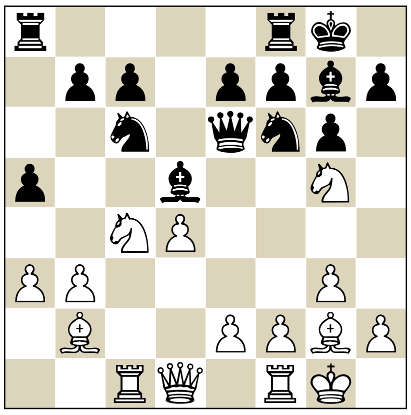
ply. 12...♖d8 would be more normal, when White may just go for an e3-♕e2-♖fd1 set-up, preserving the better chances.

13.♘g5!

Now this comes with very strong effect! The tactical point of this move is the e4 pawn push that comes next.

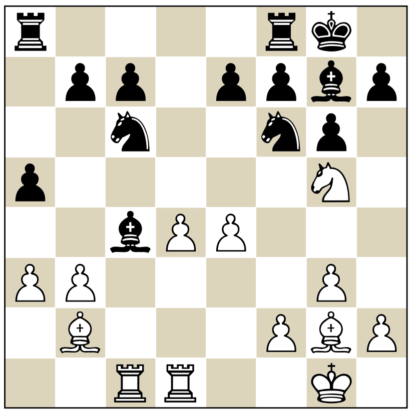


13...♕g4

Also 13...♕f5 runs into 14.e4! ♕xg5 15.f4 ♕g4 16.exd5 ♕xd1 17.♖fxd1 ♘b8 18.♖e1, and with d6 to follow White is almost winning.

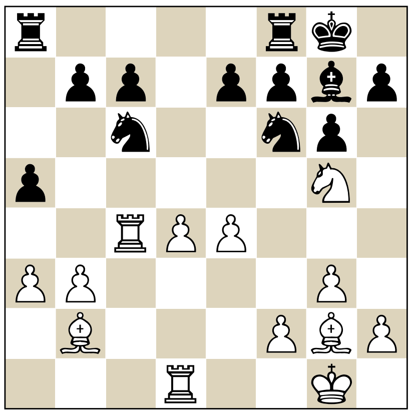
14.e4! ♕xd1 15.♖fxd1 ♗xc4

Black has to go here. The endgame is very bad for him, but I was surprised that it's not winning outright. The bishop pair and a strong centre, and the c7-pawn will be hanging after ♖xc4.



16.♖xc4

Now I think that 16.bxc4! is the easier move. It keeps the central pawns strong and White can go for e5 next: 16...h6 17.♘h3 and 18.e5 is a threat, so 17...e5!? 18.dxe5 ♘g4 19.♘f4! (I think this move is very strong now. 19.f4?! looks very natural but is inaccurate – after 19...♖fd8 White is certainly better but Black has good compensation: ...♗f8 is coming, and also ...a5-a4 and ...♘e3. And it's not that easy for White to consolidate and convert his extra pawn to a full point) 19...♘gxe5 20.♗c3!, and this looks technically winning for White! The knight comes to d5 and f4 supports the centre.



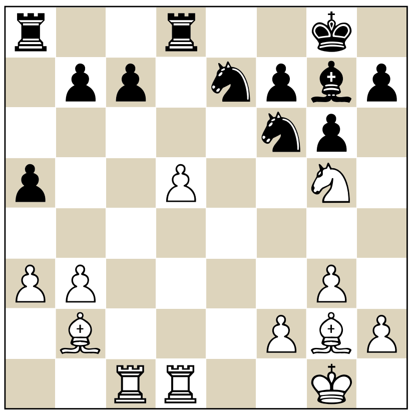
16...e6!

Yes, White is still better, but I am not sure at all what is the best way here. Probably the e5-♘e4 plan.

17.d5

After 17.e5 ♘d5 18.♘e4!? White is better, but far from winning.

17...♖fd8 18.♖cc1 exd5 19.exd5 ♘e7

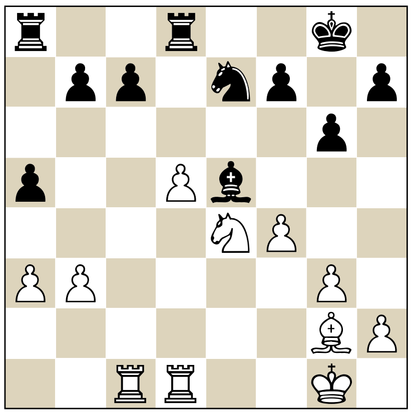


20.♗xf6

And not 20.♖xc7 ♘fxd5!, and it's just a draw.

20...♗xf6 21.♘e4 ♗e5 22.f4

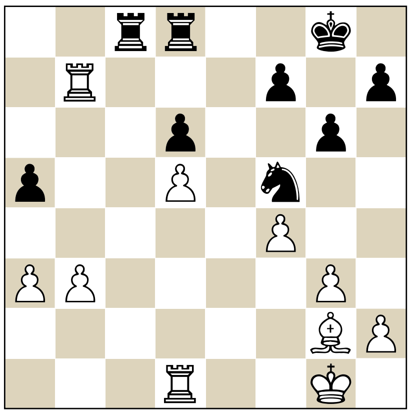
After 22.d6 ♗xd6 23.♘xd6 ♖xd6 24.♖xd6 cxd6 25.♖c7 ♔f8 26.♖xb7 ♖c8 Black is worse, although I think he will be able to hold.



22...♗d6 23.♘xd6 cxd6 24.♖c7

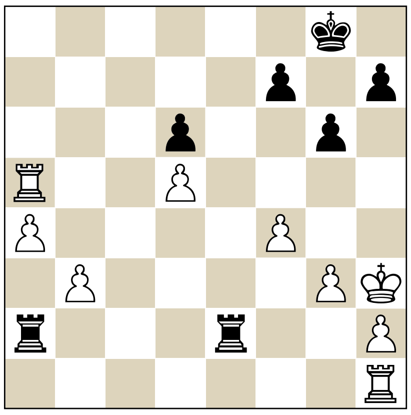
♘f5 The computer likes my 16.♖xc4 and suggests it as the first line, because it thinks the ensuing position is winning. But this is about real compensation for Black due to open files and White's weakened second rank.

25.♖xb7 ♖ac8!?



26.♗f1!? I wanted to put my bishop on c6 to control the e8 square, and by playing ♖f1-f2 I might hope for the b4 and a4 pawn pushes.

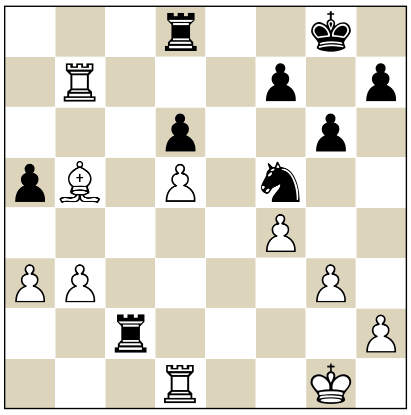
Interesting was 26.♖b5!? ♘e3 27.♖b1 ♘xg2 28.♔xg2 ♖c2+ 29.♔h3 ♖e8 30.♖xa5 ♖ee2 31.♖h1 ♖a2 32.a4,



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

and yes, this position is very tough for Black... But is it winning after 32...♖ed2…!? I am not so sure.

26...♖c2 27.♗b5



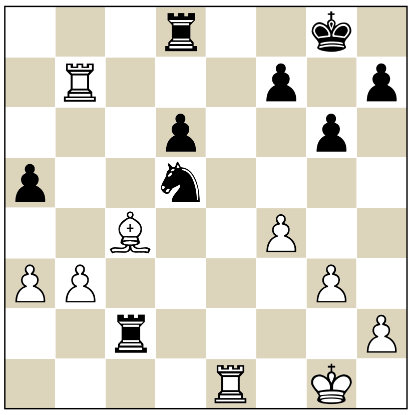
27...♘e3?

This is a mistake.

27...h5! was the move I considered best during the game. Black is trying to go ...♔g7 and ...h4 and create counterplay against my vulnerable king: 28.♗d7 ♘e3 29.♖e1 ♘xd5 30.♖a7, and White is still better, but after 30...h4 it's all very complicated and probably tenable for Black.

28.♖e1 ♘xd5 Based on a miscalculation, as Black's next move shows.

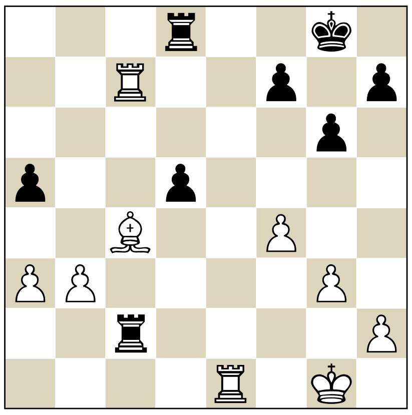
29.♗c4



29...♘c7??

He had to go 29...♖d2!, when after 30.a4 the position is still very difficult for Black; but it was the only way to keep on playing.

30.♖xc7 d5



31.♖d1!

David had certainly missed this move. Now White is a bishop up in a winning position.

31...♖e8 32.♗b5!

Black resigned.

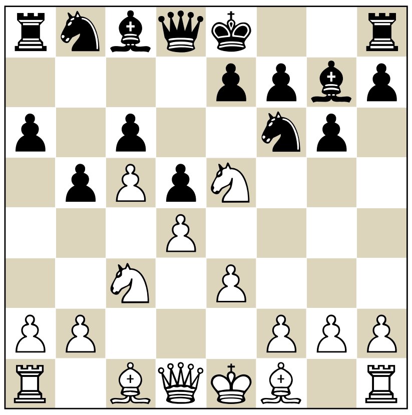
To conclude, I would like to thank the organizers of the amazing Wijk aan Zee tournament for keeping their traditional tournament alive! I hope this tradition will never end!

NOTES BY
Fabiano Caruana

SL 3.1 – D11
Fabiano Caruana
Anish Giri
Wijk aan Zee 2012 (11)

This game was played in the 11th round. Following a win against Veselin Topalov, I was highly motivated to increase my score. I also wanted to avenge my loss against Giri, just a few weeks before, at Reggio Emilia.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e3 a6 5.♘c3 b5 6.c5 g6 7.♘e5 ♗g7



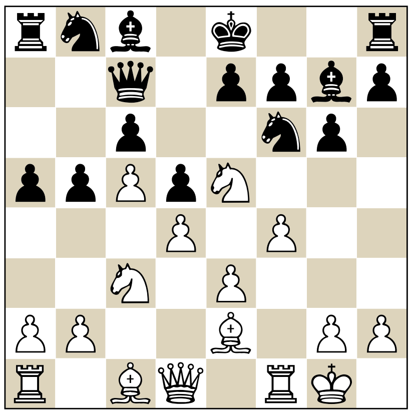
8.f4

To be honest, I couldn't remember much about this variation during the game, but I decided it was important to meet ...♘fd7 with ♘d3, without having to worry about ...e5.

8...a5 9.♗e2

9.♗d3 runs into 9...♗f5 10.♗xf5 gxf5, and the bishop on c1 isn't happy.

9...♕c7 10.0-0



10...h5!

A novelty, and a good one! Actually the idea is very simple: Black wants to

NEW IN CHESS

The revelation of Tata Steel 2012, new top-10 member Fabiano Caruana.

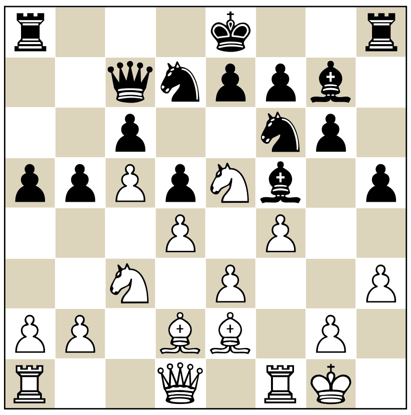
play ...♗f5 without running into g4, so it's a bit strange nobody played like this before.

My main source of inspiration in this line was the following game: 10...0-0 11.a3 ♗e6 12.♗f3 ♘bd7 13.♘d3!, and Black is really cramped and will have to defend a miserable position for a long time. White eventually won in Gelfand-Wang Yue, Bazna 2010.

11.h3 ♗f5 12.♗d2

12.g4 hxg4 13.hxg4 ♗e6 gives White nothing but weaknesses.

12...♘bd7

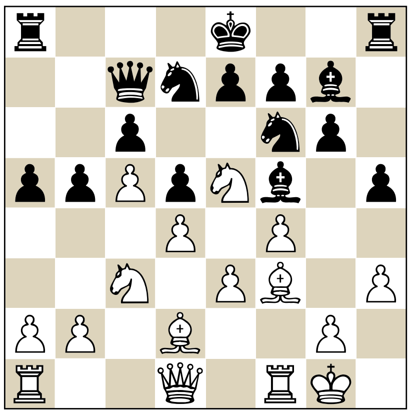


Black has achieved an ideal set-up. His bishop is securely placed on f5, he has perfect control over the e4 square, and is ready to trade off the e5-knight.

13.♗f3

This was the only move to keep any tension in the position. Surprisingly, Anish started to look a bit uncomfortable after this move, although his position is still perfectly fine.

13.♗e1 ♘e4 14.♘xe4 ♗xe4 leads to a dull equality.



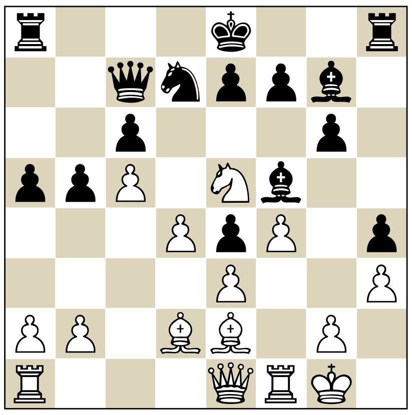
13...h4

An unnecessary move. White has no plans to play g4, so there isn't any reason to fix the kingside.

It was most accurate to begin with 13...♘e4 14.♘xe4 dxe4 15.♗e2 f6! (with the queen on d1, White has no tactics like ♗xa5) 16.♘xd7 ♗xd7 17.a4 b4 18.♗c4 e6 19.♕b3 ♔e7, and next ...f5 leads to complete equality.

14.♕e1 White is threatening e4, so Black's hand is forced.

14...♘e4 15.♘xe4 dxe4 16.♗e2

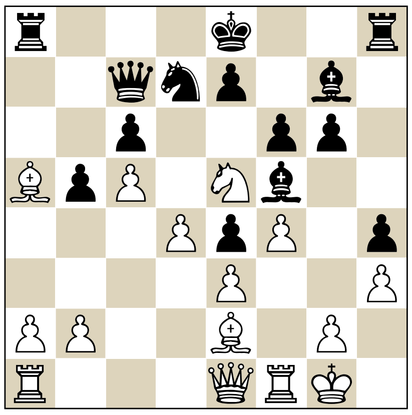


16...f6?

Surprisingly, this is a blunder, although the computer won't tell you why. Black's position was still pretty decent, but after this careless move he is on the verge of losing.

After 16...♘xe5 I had planned 17.dxe5!? (17.fxe5 f6 18.exf6 ♗xf6 gives White nothing) 17...f6 18.exf6 ♗xf6 19.♗c3, with some pressure but nothing too dramatic. Black should hold without much problem.

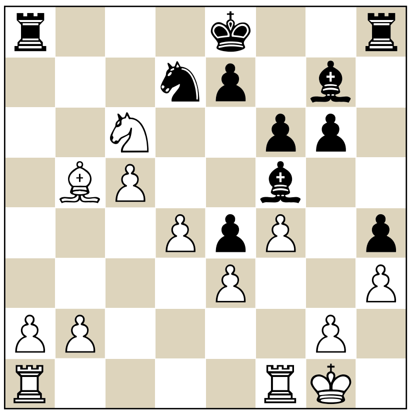
17.♗xa5! A tremendous and unexpected blow, which was certainly overlooked by Anish. For the piece, White eliminates Black's entire queenside, and he will be hard-pressed to stop the avalanche of pawns.



17...♖xa5?

It's natural to seek chances with the queens on, but this is probably already the decisive mistake.

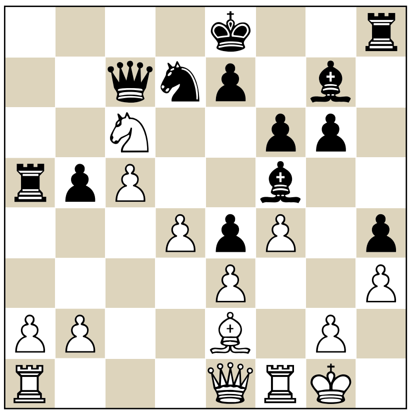
There was still a miracle chance for Black: 17...♕xa5 18.♕xa5 ♖xa5 19.♘xc6 ♖a8 20.♗xb5, and here Black has to act fast before he is overrun:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

20...e5!, opening up the centre and starting some effective counterplay: 21.b4 exf4 22.exf4 ♗e6 23.d5! (White also has to act quickly, before Black consolidates his position with ...♗d5 and ...f5). After this the game spins out of control, with both sides having numerous options and no clear conclusion in sight.

18.♘xc6



18...♖a8

The point of White's combination is this: 18...♖a6 19.♘b4 ♖a5 (19...♖a8 20.♗xb5 ♔f7 21.a4 is similar to the game. Black has no counterplay and White can just keep rolling his pawns down the board) 20.♘d5 ♕a7 21.a4! ♖xa4 (21...bxa4 22.b4 wins the rook) 22.♗xb5 ♖xa1 23.♕xa1 ♕xa1 24.♖xa1 ♔f7 25.♖a7 ♖d8 26.b4, and Black is helpless.

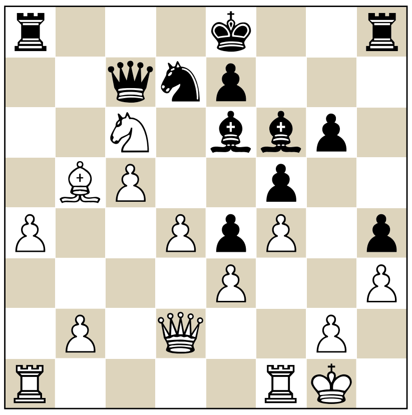
19.♗xb5

Black's position is depressing to look at. He can't make a dent in White's pawn mass, and his extra bishop is trapped behind his own pawns.

19...♗e6 20.a4 f5 21.♕d2

The simple 21.♘e5 ♗xe5 22.fxe5 ♔f7 23.b4 ♗d5 24.♗e2 also promised a winning advantage.

21...♗f6



22.d5

Now White begins taking even more space.

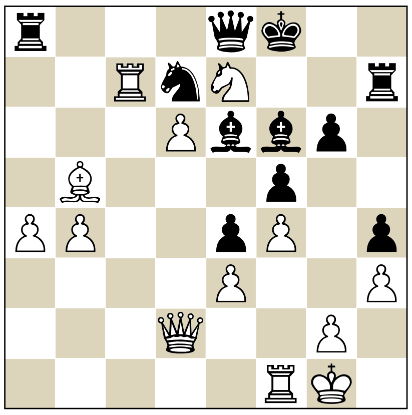
22...♗f7 23.♖ac1 ♔f8

23...0-0 24.d6 exd6 25.cxd6, wins a piece with 26.♘e7 coming next.

24.b4 ♕c8 25.d6

Now is a perfect time to open the position, since Black is completely uncoordinated.

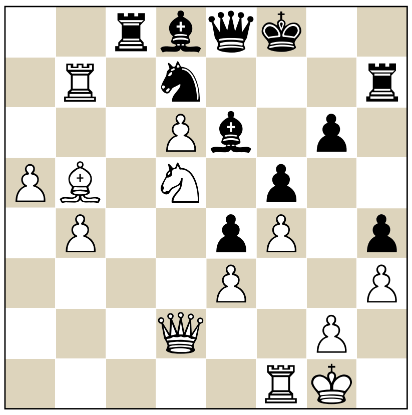
25...exd6 26.cxd6 ♕e8 27.♘e7 ♗e6 28.♖c7 ♖h7



29.♘d5

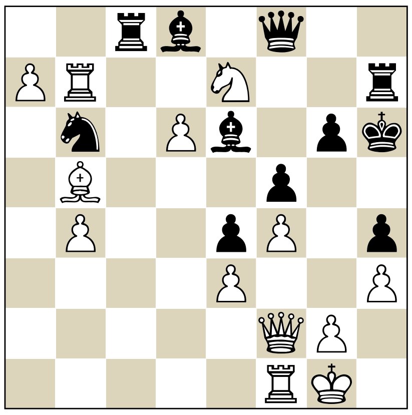
I missed an even simpler way: 29.♗xd7 ♗xd7 30.♖xd7 ♕xd7 31.♕d5, winning the rook on a8 due to the mate threat ♕g8.

29...♗d8 30.♖b7 ♖c8 31.a5



The sadistic approach, slowly advancing the a-pawn while Black can't even move.

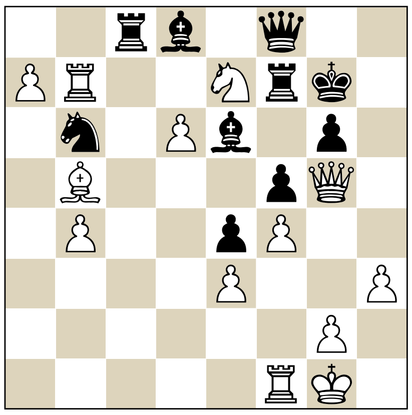
31...♔g7 32.a6 ♔h6 33.a7 ♕f8 34.♘e7 ♘b6 35.♕f2



35...♖f7

After 35...♕f6 I had planned the attractive finishing blow 36.♗d7!, and I'm glad to see the machine approves.

36.♕xh4+ ♔g7 37.♕g5



White is winning every black pawn. Black could have safely resigned here, but Anish decided to play on until the time control.

37...♗d5 38.♕xg6+ ♔h8 39.♕h5+ ♔g7 40.♘xf5+ ♔g8 41.♘e7+

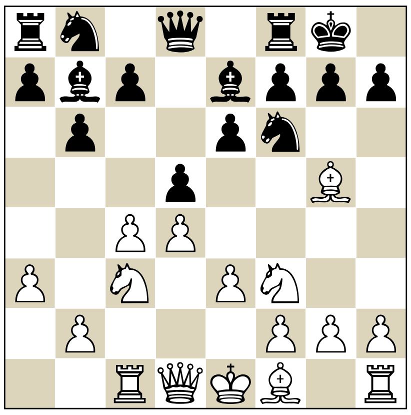
Black resigned.

NOTES BY

Sergey Karjakin

QI 4.4 – A15
Magnus Carlsen
Sergey Karjakin
Wijk aan Zee 2012 (9)

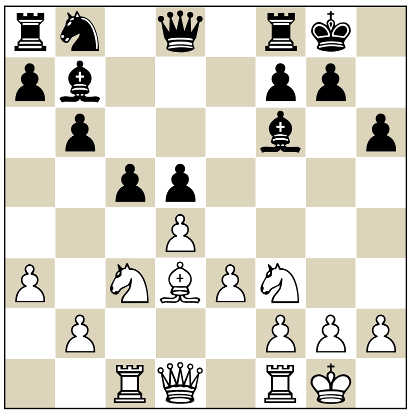
1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 b6 3.♘c3 ♗b7 4.d4 e6 5.a3 d5 6.♗g5 ♗e7 7.e3 0-0 8.♖c1



By choosing a rare branch of the Petrosian Variation, Magnus forced me to stop and think.

8...h6 Not the main move, and one which provoked differing comments.

9.♗xf6 ♗xf6 10.cxd5 exd5 11.♗d3 c5 12.0-0



Opinions about this position were divided. Levon Aronian said that this was a well-known variation of the Queen's Gambit with the useful extra tempo a2-a3 for White, but after the game Magnus said that the variation was completely harmless for Black.

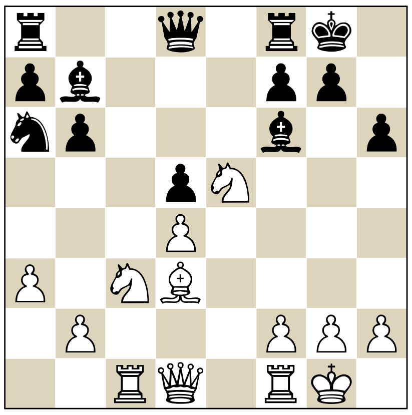
12...♘a6

Preparing ...♘c7-e6, but in the end the knight followed a different route...

13.♘e5

An interesting try. White wants to support his knight with f2-f4. I was expecting the knight manoeuvre 13.♘e2 followed by ♘g3 or ♘f4. Another possibility was 13.♗b1, with a complicated game.

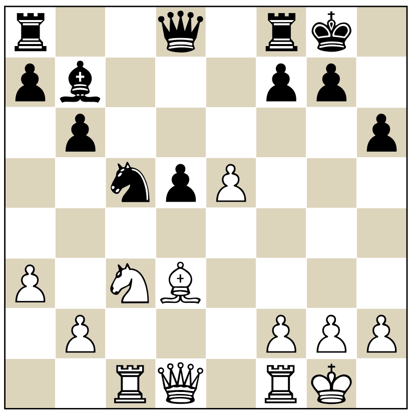
13...cxd4 14.exd4



14...♗xe5

At the board the interesting alternative 14...♘c5 seemed extremely dangerous to me in view of 15.♘xf7 (15.f4 is steadier) 15...♖xf7 16.dxc5 bxc5 17.♕h5, and to a human Black's position looks very alarming in view of the weakness of the b1-h7 diagonal.

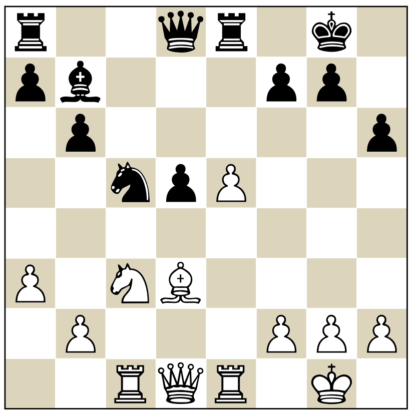
15.dxe5 ♘c5



16.♖e1! The only try for an advantage. 16.♘b5 ♘xd3 17.♕xd3 ♗a6 does not set Black any problems. If 18.f4 ♖c8 19.♖ce1?! (a sharp attempt to play for a win – White should reconcile himself to a draw after 19.♖xc8 ♕xc8 20.♕xd5 ♕c5+ 21.♕xc5 bxc5 22.a4 ♗xb5 23.axb5 ♖b8) 19...♕d7 20.a4 ♖c4! 21.b3 ♗xb5 22.axb5 ♖b4 and Black is better.

16...♖e8

The natural 16...d4 does not work: 17.♘e4 ♗xe4 (bad is 17...♕d5? 18.♗c4! ♕xe5 19.♘xc5 ♕xc5 20.♗xf7+ and White wins) 18.♗xe4 and now after 18...d3? 19.♖xc5 bxc5 20.♗xa8 ♕xa8 21.♕xd3 White wins a pawn.



17.f4?!

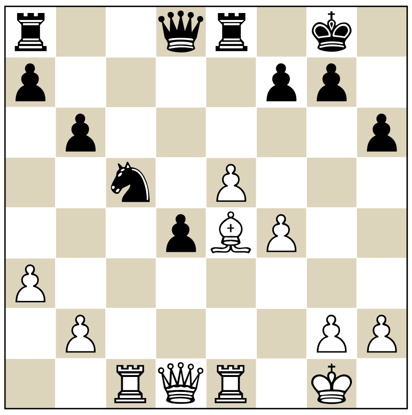
After this move White can no longer fight for an advantage. He should have played 17.♗f1 a6 (the b5 square has to be covered), and here in the computer's opinion the most accurate is 18.♖c2!, retaining a minimal advantage.

17...d4 18.♘e4?

A mistake, which essentially costs White the game. After this he ends up in a very bad position.

He should have played 18.♘b5 ♕d5 19.♖c2 ♘xd3 20.♕xd3 ♗a6 21.a4 ♗xb5 22.axb5 ♖ac8 with a draw.

18...♗xe4 19.♗xe4



19...d3!

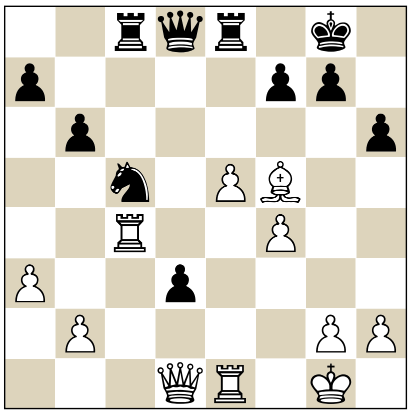
An attractive move, which works thanks to the important inclusion 16...♖e8 17.f4.

20.♖c4

At the board I considered this move to be the strongest, but apparently 20.♖e3 was the lesser evil: 20...♕d4 21.♕f3 ♖ac8 22.♖d1 d2 23.♔f1, and White still somehow holds on.

If 20.♗xa8 d2 21.♗c6 ♕d4+ 22.♔h1 dxe1♕+ 23.♕xe1 ♘d3 24.♕f1 ♖e6 25.♖c2 ♘xf4 with a big advantage for Black, or 20.♖xc5 ♕d4+! – here the importance of including ...♖e8/f4 is seen!

20...♖c8 21.♗f5



21...♕d5

21...b5 was also strong, but I did not want to deprive the knight at c5 of its support.

22.♖c3 ♖cd8 23.♕d2 ♕d4+ 24.♔h1

24.♔f1 a5 was equally bad for White.

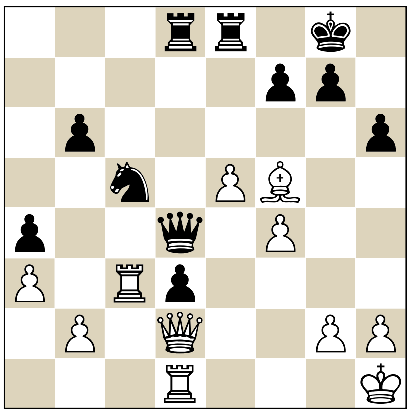
24...a5!

Preventing b2-b4.

25.♖b1

It is hard to suggest anything for White instead.

25...a4 26.♖d1



26...♖d5

But this is overdoing it! Of course, Black's position is also good here, but why not calmly win the exchange by 26...g6! 27.♗xd3 ♘e4 28.♗xe4 ♕xd2 29.♖xd2 ♖xd2, with an easy win!

27.h4 g6

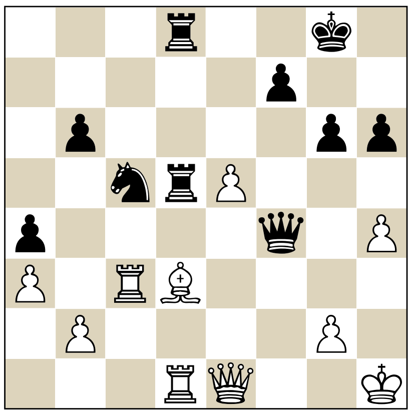
27...♖ed8 28.h5 f6 was stronger, when White has no defence.

28.♗xd3 ♖ed8 29.♕e1 ♕xf4

Magnus Carlsen
TATA
Sergey Karjakin

NEW IN CHESS

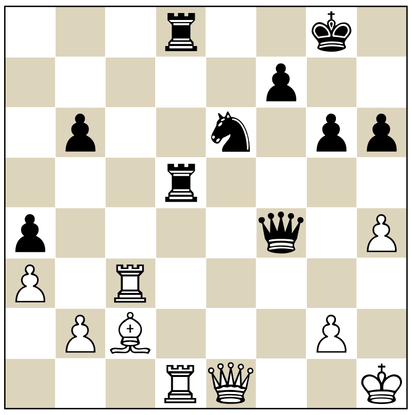
Sergey Karjakin took his time to convert a winning advantage. 'From this point Magnus defended desperately, but two extra pawns were sufficient even for me...'



30.e6! ♘xe6 30...♘xd3?! 31.♖dxd3 ♖xd3 32.e7, with drawing chances.

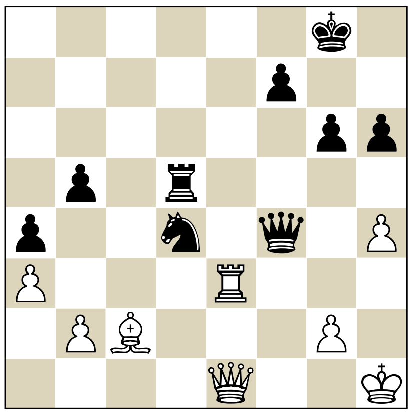
31.♗c2

Over the last few moves White has defended in the most resilient way.



31...b5 The most forceful was 31...♘d4! 32.♗xa4 ♘f5 33.♖xd5 ♖xd5 34.♕e8+ ♔g7 35.♗b3 ♕xh4+ and wins. However, experiencing a shortage of time, I decided to play solidly.

32.♖xd5 ♖xd5 33.♖e3 ♘d4

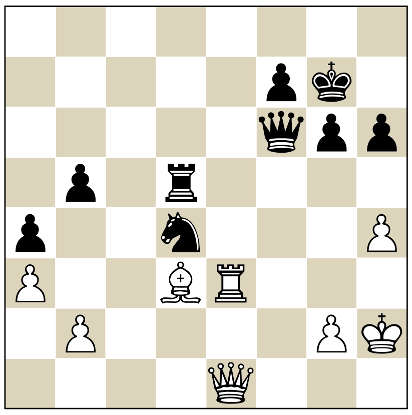


34.♗d3

34.♗xg6 does not work: 34...fxg6 35.♖e8+ ♔g7 36.♖e7+ ♔f6 winning.

34...♔g7 35.♔g1 ♕f6 36.♔h2

More resilient was 36.♕f2 ♘f5 (36...♕d6!?) 37.♗xf5 ♖xf5 38.♖f3 ♖xf3 39.gxf3, when although the position should be won, Black faces a lengthy struggle.



36...♖h5

Played in a time scramble. According to the computer, 36...♖c5! is more forceful, when White loses his b2-pawn. However, without the computer it is hard to realize this even when not in time trouble...

37.♖h3

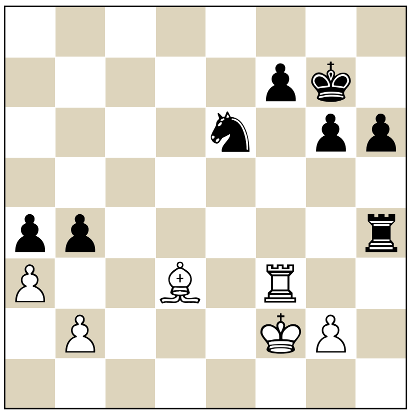
37.♖e4 was somewhat more resilient.

37...♘e6

Here there were various ways, but up to the time control I tried to choose the most human decisions.

Easier was 37...♕f4+ 38.♕g3 ♘f3+! 39.gxf3 ♕d2+ and wins.

38.♖f3 ♖xh4+ 39.♔g1 ♕d4+ 40.♕f2 ♕xf2+ 41.♔xf2 b4

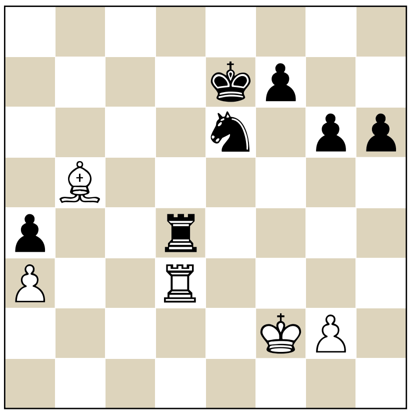


From this point Magnus defended desperately, but two extra pawns were sufficient even for me...

42.♖e3 ♖d4 43.♗b5 ♔f6 44.♖f3+

Or 44.♗xa4 bxa3 45.♖xa3 ♖d2+ and wins.

44...♔e7 45.♖d3 bxa3 46.bxa3



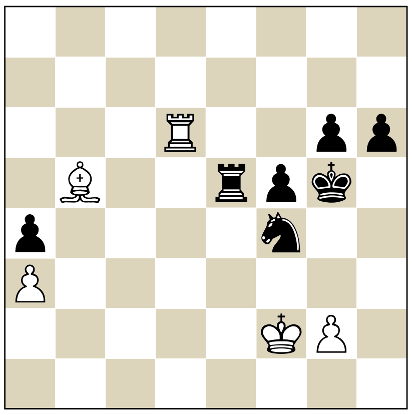
46...♖f4+

46...♖xd3 47.♗xd3 ♘c5 48.♗b5 f5 49.♔e3 g5 50.♔d4 ♔d6 was most probably also winning, but I decided to keep the rooks on.

47.♔e3 f5 48.♖d7+ ♔f6 49.♖d6 ♖e4+ 50.♔f2 ♔g5 51.♗e8

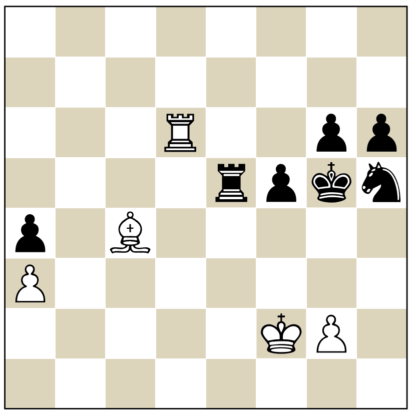
On 51.♗c6 Black wins with 51...♘c5!.

51...♘f4 52.♗b5 ♖e5



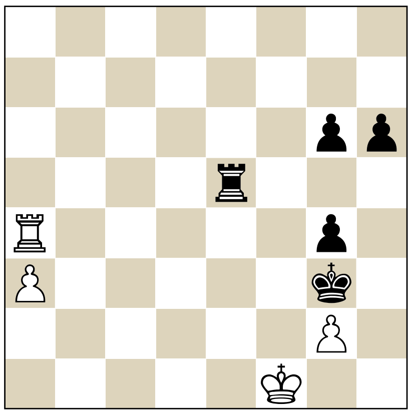
53.♗c4 53.♗xa4 loses to 53...♖e2+.

53...♘h5



The decisive knight manoeuvre! Black gives up the a4-pawn, but in return he weaves a mating net around the white king.

54.♖a6 ♘f6 55.♖xa4 ♘g4+ 56.♔f1 ♔h4! 57.♗e2 ♔g3 58.♗xg4 fxg4



In view of the fact that the black king infiltrates to h2, the endgame is completely hopeless for White.

59.♖b4 h5 60.a4 ♔h2

White resigned.

NOTES BY

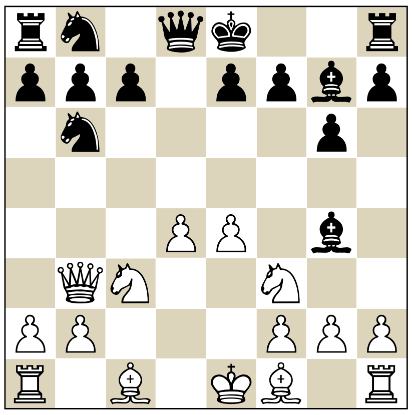
David Navara

EO 52.9 – D90
Levon Aronian
David Navara
Wijk aan Zee 2012 (11)

My score against Levon had been very bleak before this game, as I had scored just two draws out of seven games.

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.♕b3 ♘b6 6.d4 ♗g7 7.e4 ♗g4

7...0-0 8.♗e3 ♗g4 9.♖d1 transposes to one of the Grünfeld main lines favoured by many Czech and Slovak players.

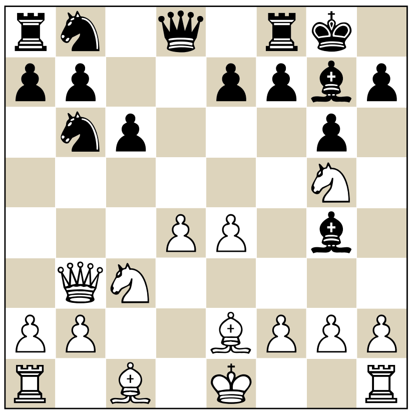


8.♗b5+

This idea was first played in the game Illescas-Negi at the Spanish Club Championship in 2010. At that time I was GM Illescas' team mate, so I know the game well. Later I was told that the entire idea comes from GM Kramnik's home lab.

The immediate 8.♘g5 0-0 9.♗e2 is less dangerous, because Black can often develop his knight to the usual c6 square.

8...c6 9.♘g5 0-0 10.♗e2



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10...♗xe2

10...♗c8 11.h4! gives White an unpleasant initiative along the h-file. The Indian prodigy played 11...c5? and did not get adequate compensation for the pawn after 12.dxc5 ♘6d7 13.♗e3, but in the end he still prevailed.

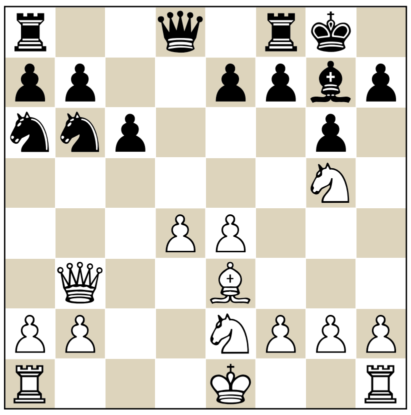
11.♘xe2 ♘a6

I played this new move fairly quickly, as it was part of my home preparation, which dated back to September 2010. The game Gordon-Bok, German Bundesliga 2011, saw 11...♘8d7. I discussed this move with my second GM Jansa before the game and rejected it, because the knight restricts Black's queen.

12.♗e3

This logical move is insufficient for an advantage.

I was more afraid of 12.♕h3, e.g. 12...h6 13.♘f3 ♕d7 14.♕h4 g5 15.♗xg5! hxg5 16.♘xg5, with a dangerous attack – the rook transfer along the route a1-d1-d3-g3 is not easy to parry. I intended to deviate with 14...h5 15.0-0 c5, after which the position should be equal.



12...♕d6 This was still my preparation, but it took me some time to recall it. It makes sense to undermine the position of White's queen before playing ...e7-e5.

13.0-0 ♕b4 14.♕xb4?!

If White intended to swap queens, he should have done so without activating my knight.

14.♕c2 ♕c4 15.♖fc1 (15.♕d2 ♕b4) looks like a good try, since 15...♕xc2 16.♖xc2 ♘b4 17.♖c3 does not transpose to the game.

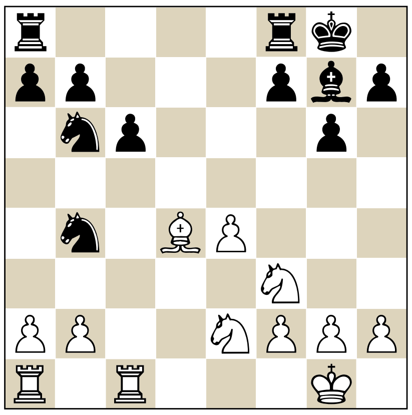
14...♘xb4 15.♖fc1 e5

Black's position is already more comfortable.

16.♘f3 exd4

I resisted the temptation to jump to d3, as the black knight is already causing White enough problems on its current square b4.

17.♗xd4



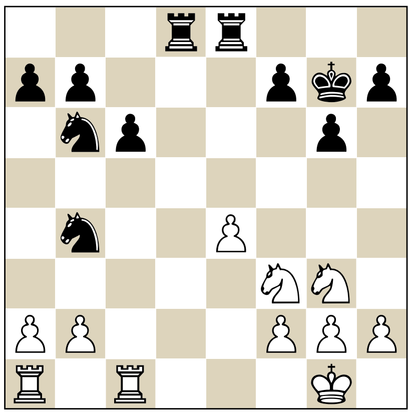
17...♖fe8

17...♗xd4?! 18.♘fxd4 would have allowed White to defend his central pawn with f2-f3.

18.♗xg7 ♔xg7 19.♘g3

I had rather expected 19.♘c3; it might be useful to defend the a2-pawn.

19...♖ad8



20.♘e1

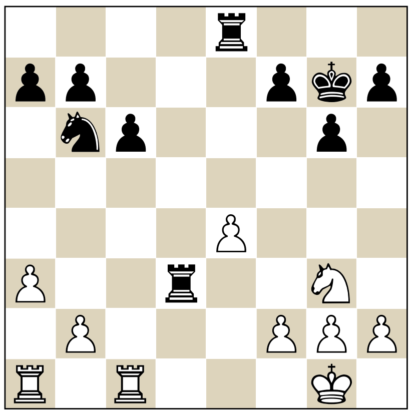
Levon accompanied this move with a draw offer. I had never got such a good position during the previous 10 rounds and could hardly imagine myself losing it.

20...♖d2 21.a3 ♘d3

21...♘a6 was not bad, either.

22.♘xd3 Only here did I notice the unexpected retreat 22.♘f1!, as well as the best reply: 22...♘xc1 23.♘xd2 ♖d8!, which maintains a slight edge for Black. Still, White should be able to hold after 24.♖xc1 ♖xd2 25.♖c2 ♖xc2 26.♘xc2 ♘c4 27.b4, with a king march into the centre.

22...♖xd3

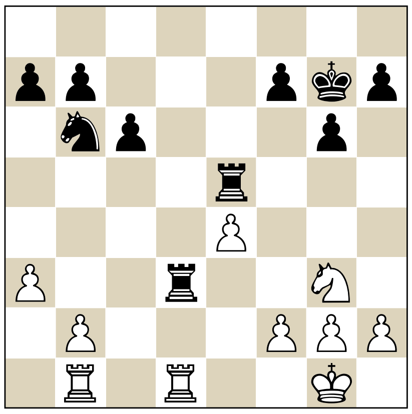


23.♖ab1? This might well be the decisive mistake. After 23.f3 Black maintains the better chances owing to his control of the d-file and the weakness of the b2-pawn, but White's position looks tenable.

23...♖e5!

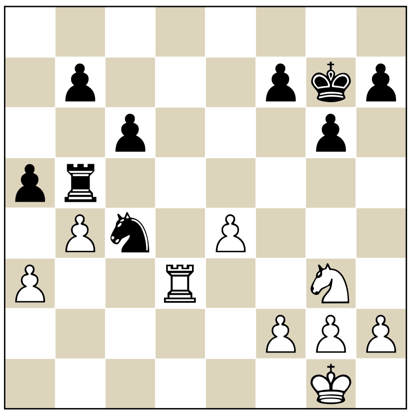
The rook enters the play and White inevitably loses a pawn in view of the threat 24...♖b5 and 25...♘a4, or 25...♖db3. From here on in, Levon defended very well, but this time it was not enough for a draw.

24.♖d1



24...♖xd1+ The line 24...♖b3 25.♘e2! looked too complicated to me. White threatens to win an exchange with 26.♘d4, and my idea 25...♘a4? (correct is 25...♘c4! 26.f3 ♖e7!, with a large edge) allows White to equalize: 26.f3 ♖xb2?! 27.♖xb2 ♘xb2 28.♖d7, with serious counterplay, e.g. 28...♖b5? 29.♘d4 ♖b6 30.♘e6+ ♔f6 31.♘d8, and White is already better.

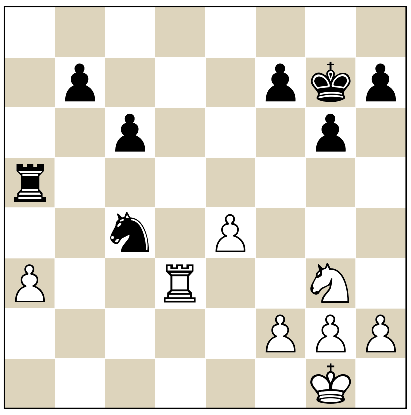
25.♖xd1 ♖b5 26.b4 ♘c4 27.♖d3 a5



28.bxa5

White, of course, did not go for 28.♖c3? axb4! 29.♖xc4 bxa3 30.♖a4 ♖b1+ 31.♘f1 ♖a1, and Black wins.

28...♖xa5



29.f4!

White has to launch a counterattack.

29...♖xa3 30.♖d7 b5!

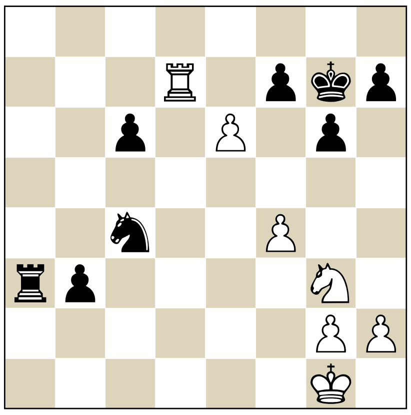
30...♘e3 was also tempting, but I assumed that my passed pawn would be more dangerous than the e-pawn.

31.e5 b4

Black has no time to defend against the threats.

31...♔f8 32.♘e4 b4 33.♘f6 ♖a8 34.e6 would have led to a perpetual.

32.e6 b3



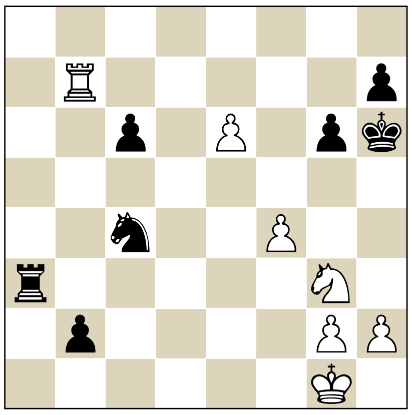
33.♖xf7+

I had expected 33.e7, when Black has an interesting choice:

A) 33...♖a8 34.♘e4 (34.♖d8? b2 35.e8♕ b1♕+ 36.♘f1 ♕b6+) 34...♖e8. After the eventual swap of pawn e7 for b3, Black remains a pawn up with excellent winning chances;

B) 33...b2 34.e8♕ b1♕+ 35.♘f1 ♕f5 36.♖d8 looked too risky to me. In fact, Black will be able to protect his king, but I doubt whether he can win.

33...♔h6 34.♖b7 b2



35.♔f2!

This was an unpleasant surprise. White rules out the move 35...♖e3, which would have been a grave mistake in view of 36.♖xb2.

35...♖a7

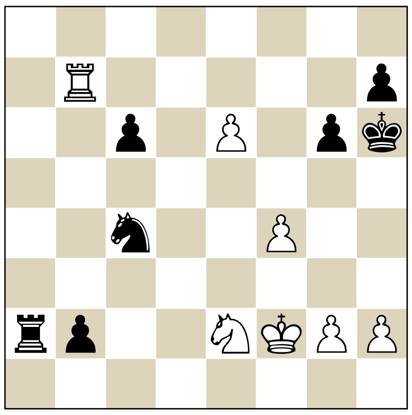
I wanted to activate my king to stop the e6-pawn.

36.♖b8 36.e7? fails to 36...♖xb7 37.e8♕ b1♕ 38.♕f8+ ♖g7, winning.

36...♖a8 37.♖b7 ♖a2

Finally I hit upon the right idea.

38.♘e2

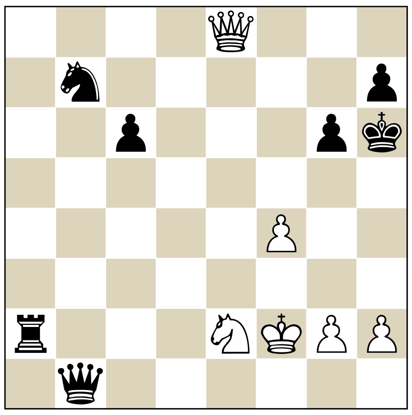


38...♘d6! Having regained my vision, I found this move to stop White's e-pawn. After 38...♖a7? 39.♖b8 both 39...♖e7? 40.♘c3 ♖xe6 41.♖b4! and 39...♔g7? 40.♘c3 ♔f6 41.♔e2! ♔xe6 42.♔d3 enable White to hold.

39.e7! White again finds the best chance. The activation of Black's king would have effectively finished the game, e.g. 39.♖b8 ♔g7 40.e7 ♔f6 41.e8♕ ♘xe8 42.♔e3 ♘d6 43.♘c3 ♘b5!, with material gains.

39...♘xb7 40.e8♕ b1♕

At this point I believed I was winning.



Wijk aan Zee A 2012 cat. XXI

					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		TPR
1	Levon Aronian	IGM	ARM	2805	*	0	½	1	½	1	1	1	½	1	½	1	0	1	9	2892
2	Magnus Carlsen	IGM	NOR	2835	1	*	½	½	½	½	½	0	½	1	1	1	½	½	8	2835
3	Teimour Radjabov	IGM	AZE	2773	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	1	½	½	½	1	1	½	8	2840
4	Fabiano Caruana	IGM	ITA	2736	0	½	½	*	½	½	½	1	½	1	1	½	½	1	8	2843
5	Vasily Ivanchuk	IGM	UKR	2766	½	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	0	½	1	1	1	7½	2811
6	Hikaru Nakamura	IGM	USA	2759	0	½	½	½	½	*	½	½	1	1	½	½	1	½	7½	2811
7	Gata Kamsky	IGM	USA	2732	0	½	½	½	½	½	*	1	½	½	1	½	1	0	7	2785
8	Sergey Karjakin	IGM	RUS	2769	0	1	0	0	½	½	0	*	1	0	1	½	1	1	6½	2753
9	Loek van Wely	IGM	NED	2692	½	½	½	½	½	0	½	0	*	½	½	½	½	½	5½	2702
10	Boris Gelfand	IGM	ISR	2739	0	0	½	0	1	0	½	1	½	*	½	½	½	0	5	2669
11	Veselin Topalov	IGM	BUL	2770	½	0	½	0	½	½	0	0	½	½	*	½	½	1	5	2666
12	Vugar Gashimov	IGM	AZE	2761	0	0	0	½	0	½	½	½	½	½	½	*	½	1	5	2667
13	David Navara	IGM	CZE	2712	1	½	0	½	0	0	0	0	½	½	½	½	*	½	4½	2648
14	Anish Giri	IGM	NED	2714	0	½	½	0	0	½	1	0	½	1	0	0	½	*	4½	2648

NEW IN CHESS

David Navara and his coach Vlastimil Jansa at the traditional peasoup dinner.

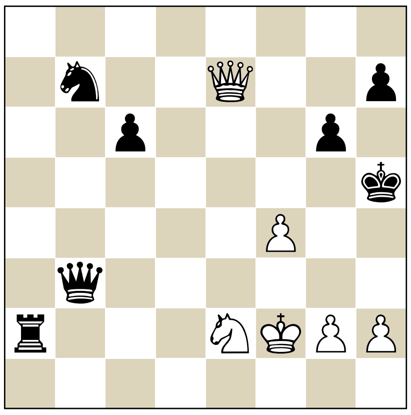
41.♕f8+ ♔h5 42.♕e7

Now I realized that it would not be so easy.

42...♕b6+ 43.♔f3 ♕b3+

Several moves ago I had not noticed that 43...♖a3+ would be impossible.

44.♔f2



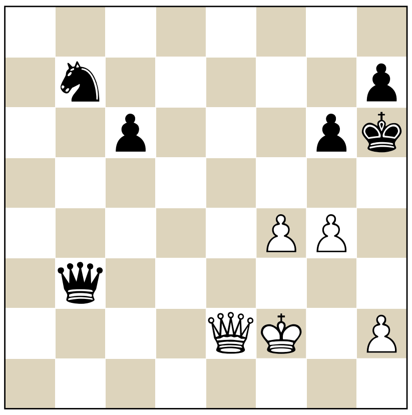
44...♖xe2+! 45.♕xe2+?!

White decided to move the queen from e7, which helped me to win the game.

I saw the line 45.♔xe2 h6! 46.h3 ♕g3! (this is why I inserted the checks on moves 42-43) 47.♕e5+ g5 48.♕e8+ ♔h4 49.♕xc6 ♕xf4 50.♕xb7 ♔g3 and correctly assessed the resulting position as winning. Black can follow up with ...h5-h4, play ...♔h2, and then attack the g2-pawn.

45...♔h6 46.g4

I was more afraid of 46.♕e7! – Black can stumble here pretty easily. Still, 46...♕c2+ 47.♔e1 ♕c5! should lead to a win, e.g. 48.♕xb7 ♕g1+ 49.♔e2 ♕xg2+ 50.♔e3 ♕h3+!, and Black remains two pawns up.



46...♘d8

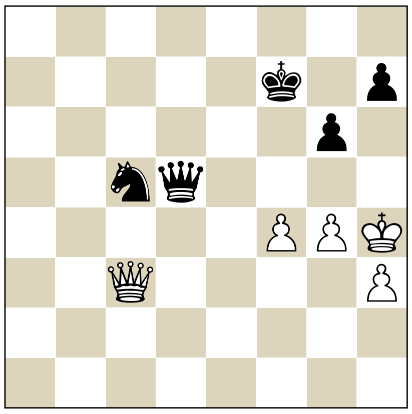
The knight finally enters the play. I would like to place it on a better square than d8, but then 47.g5+ ♔g7 48.♕e5+ would have followed.

47.♕e7 ♘e6 48.♕h4+

After 48.f5 ♕c2+ White's king cannot avoid all the decisive checks (queen checks on c5, e5 and g4, and several knight checks).

48...♔g7 49.♕e7+ ♔g8 50.♕e8+ ♘f8 51.♕xc6 ♕e6 52.♕f3 ♘d7 53.h3 ♔f7 54.♕c3 ♕d5 55.♔g3 ♘c5 56.♔h4

Here I spent a lot of time trying to find a forced win. I miscalculated again, but at least my intuition proved to be right.



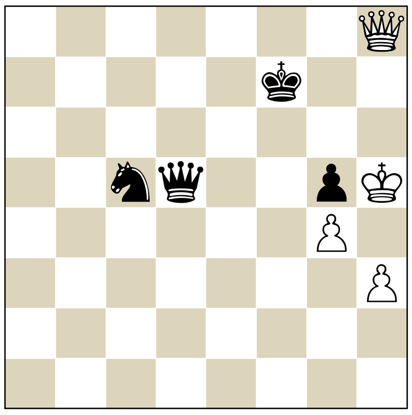
56...h6 57.♕h8

After 57.♕e3 ♕e4 the poor position of White's king decides, as 58.♕xc5 ♕e1+ leads to mate.

57...g5+ 58.fxg5 hxg5+

58...♕xg5+ 59.♔g3 ♘e4+ 60.♔f3 ♕f6+ 61.♕xf6+ ♘xf6, followed by the knight transfer to g6 and the march of Black's king's would also have sufficed, but the game continuation is more straightforward.

59.♔h5



59...♕e4! 60.♔xg5 ♘e6+

and White resigned.

I had planned to meet 61.♔h5 with 61...♘g7+ 62.♔h4 ♕e1+ 63.♔g5 ♕e5+ 64.♔h4 ♘f5+, winning the queen, and had missed 63...♕e3+ 64.♔h4 ♕f2+ 65.♔g5 ♕f6 mate. ■

Levon Aronian did not have to think twice. Armenia's favourite chess son summed up his star performance at the Tata Steel tournament in one concise and unambiguous conclusion: 'I was playing the tournament of my life!' In a candid and revealing interview with **Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam**, the current number two in the world rankings and one of the clear favourites in the upcoming Candidates' tournament, speaks about the intense work he has done and continues to do to weed out imperfections in his play and his desire to take his game to an entirely new level.

NEW IN CHESS

Mission accomplished. Levon Aronian and his girlfriend Arianne Caoili celebrate his finest success to date.

‘Trust is more important for me than anything else’

NEW IN CHESS

Surrounded by Armenian well-wishers (to his right GM Elina Danielian), Levon Aronian poses behind the national flag of his country.

Wherever he goes, they will be there. Wherever Levon Aronian plays, members of the Armenian diaspora will turn up to wish him well and thank him. To shake his hand, embrace or kiss him. They also came to Wijk aan Zee. Friends who drove over from the Czech Republic, a couple from Brussels, a group from The Hague. He humbly accepts their gratitude, patiently signs autographs and has his photo taken with them. He looks happy and he has every reason to. He's relieved, too. He had been preparing for a big battle in his last-round game against Teimour Radjabov. He had been up till one in the morning, preparing and trying to remain focused. At six he woke up, no longer able to sleep. Little could he know that the game, which started at noon, would last only 12 minutes. Radjabov felt uninspired by the tepid opening that appeared on the board, and after only 12 moves offered a draw, a result that guaranteed Aronian sole victory in the Tata Steel tournament.

Outside the playing hall he is surrounded by journalists and his fellow-countrymen. He promises to be back at four for a press conference and smilingly undergoes the admiration of his fans. In between he agrees to have a talk, but first more photos have to be taken amid compliments and more warm wishes. When he's said some words to everyone and the last autographs have leisurely been signed, we withdraw to an empty room that photographer Fred Lucas uses as his studio during the event. When I mention the warmth of his Armenian admirers, Aronian says: 'It makes me happy that people care and that they associate the efforts of our country to make progress with my play sometimes.' And with a soft voice he adds: 'That makes me very proud.'

He sits down quietly. There is no doubt that he is extremely pleased, but there is also a wish to reflect on what he has just achieved. The second half of the past year was crazily busy. One tournament followed after the other, and he was playing almost continuously. The Grand Slam Final in Bilbao, the European Team Championship in Halkidiki, the Tal Memorial in Moscow and the London Chess Classic. Particularly in the European Teams and in Moscow he showed brilliant chess, before running out of steam in London, which started only a week after Tal. 'But it was not only London. In Moscow, too, I had so many chances and I missed them. You notice that you begin to give yourself that excuse. OK, I am kind of tired. I don't play well, but I cannot blame myself.'

This time there were no excuses. Immediately after London, he and his girlfriend Arianne Caoili left for a long holiday to Malaysia and Vietnam. He enjoyed the trip immensely, but also made a remarkable discovery. 'I really liked going to Malaysia, that was great. You have this Asian hospitality and beautiful scenery. And also mountains, you know (with a meaningful smile). Any Armenian is extremely happy when he is somewhere in the mountains. And I enjoyed being in Vietnam as well. I spent the New Year at the Halong Bay, probably the most beautiful place I have been to. But while I was having this break, which I really craved, I suddenly felt that I missed playing the game. You're on holiday in some of the most magnificent places of the world, and I still felt that something was missing.'

Coming to Wijk aan Zee with this deep desire to play proved a recipe for success. His play was inspired and creative, and right from the start there was no doubt that he was a clear favourite for first place. Not hiding his enthusiasm about his achievement he almost exclaims: 'Yeah! I was actually playing the tournament of my life! I've never had a tournament where I won so many games. Winning more than half the games that you play is already a big thing, and I am extremely happy.'

Seven games he won and that was enough to compensate for the two losses he suffered and to reach the score he had in mind when he arrived in Wijk aan Zee. 'Since more solid guys like Anand or Kramnik were not here, I felt that plus-5 should be first place. I remember how in previous years even plus-3 was enough to share first! That's weird, of course. But this time there were too many youngsters (with a laugh). They are good, but they still have to become solid.'

The two games that he lost were crucial moments that didn't go unnoticed. Following wins in the first two rounds against youngsters Karjakin and Nakamura, he suffered a painful defeat against his main rival Magnus Carlsen in Round 3. 'It was unpleasant, but you know, it was not that I was playing terribly, I just got a really bad position out of the opening. So I told myself that I didn't make really huge blunders or mistakes. Even after getting that bad position out of the opening I managed to get some chances, which I praised myself for after the game. That made it easier for me to recover. I had some ups and downs against Magnus. He's a good player. You can lose a game against such a player.'

The second loss was another blow. With three rounds to go he seemed to be in a position to wrap up the tournament with a win or at least a draw against bottom-placed David Navara. Again he managed to look at this setback philosophically. 'I was very upset and I thought it was going to spoil my tournament. But then I said to myself, if you had been told that you were going to be half a point ahead with two rounds to go... I was actually thinking that in the next game I would make a quick draw, then recover and then play a big battle against Radjabov. That was my plan.'

A plan that changed when in the next game he won a great fight against Boris Gelfand. 'I came to the game thinking, OK, Boris is probably not going to be happy with a draw, but he will play it safe. I'll manage to make a draw and I will see what I will do in the last round. And then I came to the board and I could see on his face that (with a sigh) he wanted to beat me. Although I won because of a blunder, it definitely was a very interesting game. It had lots of subtleties and lots of real war and he was playing well.'

'See? I told you it was Whiskas!'

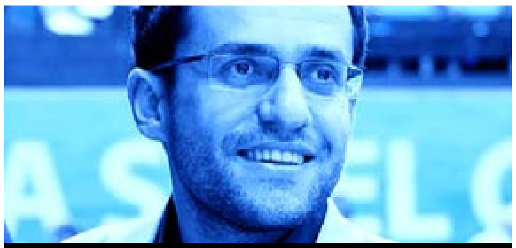
Aronian's win in Wijk aan Zee comes at the start of the two most crucial years in his chess career so far. Everything is aimed at the Candidates' tournament, where he hopes to become the challenger in the world championship match in 2013. He is backed by a team of seconds that he is always in touch with and that he regularly trains with. Most of them are Armenian friends. 'It's like working with people that you've known a long time and you're sure that you can trust them. I think trust is more important for me than anything else. Even their chess qualities. You can always kind of teach them and explain them things, but trust is a trait that you cannot teach.' It's a group process that he finds immensely gratifying. 'I enjoy being the leader. I enjoy that these guys kind of believe in me and that they try to work hard. That makes me feel good. And I really love the fact that when I play some of the lines that my friends have looked at, I know that inside they are very happy.'

He doesn't want to talk about names, but it is no secret that there is one second who works for him on a permanent basis, Armenian IM Ashot Nadanian. They have been friends for many years and Aronian praises his inventiveness and originality. Nadanian is known for his contributions to chess theory and there is even a variation against the Grünfeld named after him (1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.♘a4!?). Because of his imaginative attacking style and his background, the Baku-born Nadanian has been nick-named 'the Armenian Tal' and 'Kasparov's half-brother', and Tibor Karolyi dedicated a chapter to him in his book *Genius in the Background*.

While trying to find some further information about Nadanian, I stumbled on the following illuminating anecdote that he posted in a blog: 'In

IM Ashot Nadanian, Levon Aronian's permanent second (and inventor of the Nadanian Variation in the Grünfeld) together with his daughter Kiti.

1998 I was playing in the Linares Open tournament. One day I bought some food and among other things there was some canned fish. In the evening, a very young Levon Aronian entered my room. He picked up the tin, and seeing the logo of the manufacturer – a tiny kitten – he asserted – with healthy laughter – that it was food for cats. Although he knew that it was not so, Levon nevertheless made fun of me during the whole tournament. "Well, have you eaten Whiskas today?" Or: "The store still has food for cats?" His laughter was contagious and made me laugh along. Six years later my daughter was born. One day I met Levon. "Congratulations, Ashot! How did you name your little girl?" "Her name is Kiti." "See? I told you it was Whiskas!"



'I was watching a lot of Alan Partridge. One of my inspirations here.'

I thought about Nadanian's story a couple of times while having breakfast in Hotel Zeeduin, the hotel where most of the players of the top group were lodged. Last year a regular feature during breakfast would be the Levon Aronian Show. Addressing colleagues from his table or getting up and walking over to their tables he would crack jokes, make hilarious comments, tease them, and happily engage in verbal battles. He was sharp and witty, and would almost invariably have the final word. How different things were this year. Instead of challenging the other players, Aronian would silently sit at his table, lost in thought, often with his back to the other guests. Sometimes he would quietly eat together with Arianne, but he would always leave as inconspicuously as he had arrived.

When I refer to his changed behaviour he smiles. 'Maybe I am getting older. I try joking once in a while, but yeah, with time I am getting more reserved. I guess at some point you start to appreciate a more subtle kind of humour. Lately I've been watching a lot of English humour. During the tournament I was watching a lot of Alan Partridge. One of my inspirations here. It's a fictional character played by English comedian Steve Coogan. He's the radio broadcaster of a Norfolk radio station. Most of the stuff is brilliant. I also watched another series with Steve Coogan, Saxondale, which is kind of good too.'

Still, it's tempting to see his silence at breakfast as part of a generally more serious attitude to his game. A change that he is totally devoted to with the 'Candidates' on the horizon. With remarkable openness he explains that he has been working on a wide range of weaknesses in his chess. He feels he has improved his concentration during the game, which was not good enough. With the help of a friend who collects study material for him he has been dedicating himself to the endgame. 'He tries really hard, he loves helping me. So not to disappoint him, I read all his endgame books.' And he continues eagerly: 'I just got more passionate about chess. With a passion for the endgame you start realizing how difficult chess is. How complex every little position is. It makes you fall in love with the geometry, all the pieces, the way they go, and what an amazing move you sometimes have to make to win the game. Even the simplest things that you would think you can do with your eyes closed prove too difficult for humans.'

He's also given thought to his famous optimism, which Vladimir Kramnik called one of his weaknesses in our previous issue. 'It's when you lose respect for your opponent's moves. That's very dangerous. Actually I've been thinking about this for a long time. I think that what made me play better against certain people who I had a very bad score against, was that I learned to respect them. Because before I kept on losing but I kept on disrespecting their moves. Saying, no this cannot be happening, they're not better players. When you learn to understand that actually they are also good, that's when you can beat them.'

And, as if he hadn't already been a world-class player for many years, he was also dissatisfied with his openings. Those he tackled, too. 'Lately I've been managing to improve where I didn't really have good results, in preparation. I've got some ideas. Before I used to sit in front of the board and I couldn't stand it for too long. But now I enjoy it much more. I fell in love with the game.

'I've tried to bring more creativity into my preparation. Sometimes I still fail, like against Navara. I should have checked it better. Or against Magnus. But sometimes I manage to bring some good ideas early on. I try to check all possible sacrifices with the computer and with my seconds. I think that's a profession by itself, being able to work with the computer.'

Again I refer to Kramnik's interview and his conviction that you no longer win games in the opening by finding one move, but that you have to understand systems or complexes, a case in point being Aronian's win against Giri, where he showed deeper understanding of the requirements of the position. 'And Kramnik is the guy to talk to. I think his input into chess is as valuable as Kasparov's, maybe more. The way he continuously changed entire openings, the different aspects of the game, for years. Like some openings people laughed at and that are now main lines, like the Berlin. This is what I was actually trying to do with my Queen's Gambit. I lost a couple of games, got disappointed, and I thought, is there something wrong with the opening? Maybe it's not my style. But then I told myself, it doesn't matter if it's not my style, you still have to play it and you still have to learn it. I can make it mine. There are things that I have to thank Kramnik for, many things that he told me about the way to work with computers.'

He is grateful for Kramnik's advice, but doesn't follow him blindly. He has been trying to find his own way and explains that there are aspects of Kramnik's approach that he doesn't like (and of course Kramnik disagrees with him!). Such as his tendency to analyse openings right into the endgame, which Aronian finds exaggerated. But he's excited to discover new approaches and enter new territories. 'Places where I've never been. It also feels great that you can invent certain things and that people start playing your openings, that they get popular.'

When I suggest that he believes that he can take the game to a new level he nods. Just like he nods when I say that he seems to be thoroughly enjoying this new maturing process, the feeling that he is improving all the time. 'Yes. It feels really great. Even when it doesn't pay off at first. Still, when you play a new opening you get so excited and if you have found some new things in that opening that changed the evaluation of things that had been there for hundreds of games, you feel proud. I think that by studying new things, it doesn't have to be in chess, you improve as a player.'

This last remark doesn't come as a surprise from a player who has never made a secret of his passion for literature, film or music. 'I believe that when I am inspired I play better. But I don't do things for inspiration, I do them because I can't live without them, because they are part of me, they make me happy.' He shares these passions with his girlfriend, but is quick to point out a difference: 'Actually Arianne is interested in far more things than I am. Because her knowledge is broad and mine is just chess. And a bit of music. And, no, I am not being modest. It's just, you have general knowledge, you know a little bit of many things, but you don't really know much. But in chess and in jazz I try to prod for everything. That's what I am hungry for. That's what I am really interested in. To know more and more and more. I'm greedy there.'

In the coming months all his preparation and inspiration will be aimed at the Candidates' tournament. I mention that Garry Kasparov will probably see him as one of the big favourites after the praise he showered on Magnus Carlsen and him recently. Talking about Kasparov I refer to a friendly chat he had with the former World Champion at the closing of the London Chess Classic. And as friendly chats with Kasparov in London often have far-reaching consequences, I wonder if he's ever thought about working with the man whose mother is after all Armenian. His reaction seems genuinely surprised. 'Oh, I actually never thought about that. We just talked a bit, because I never really talked to Garry. It's a difficult question. It's just one of those things. I don't know what it is and I don't know if it's possible or if it's going to happen or if it's never going to happen or if there is sense in it. I just liked talking to someone who was a great player. Just like I loved having a couple of words with Spassky, one of my chess heroes.'

His reference to Spassky prompts me to suggest that his wish to master the Queen's Gambit would have his approval, as to Spassky's mind an understanding of this opening shows a general understanding of chess. 'Actually, once I won a game, I don't remember against who, in a Ruy Lopez with black, and Spassky was there and he said that it was a good game. I was very very proud of myself. It's kind of a really flattering thing to hear people who were actually great to have a good opinion about you. Spassky could do anything he wanted on the board. He was incredibly versatile. And that's what I always strive for.' ■

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Moving Up

The B- and C-Groups in Wijk aan Zee are not only attractive and exciting tournaments in their own right, but they also offer participants the opportunity to jump to a higher level in the next edition of the Tata pyramid. This year's B-Group was won outright by India's Pentala Harikrishna, who will make his debut in the top group next year. Jan Timman returned to Wijk aan Zee after an eight-year absence and looks at the second group in more detail in his column. Here we present you with a fine example of Harikrishna's understanding of the Berlin Defence.

In the C-Group all eyes were initially on top seed Matthew Sadler, but the pace was set by Hans Tikkanen and Maxim Turov. At the end of a headlong race, the grandmaster from St. Petersburg accumulated the impressive score of 10½ out of 13 to take first place. Turov annotates one of his eight wins, which he describes as 'far from perfect, but amusing'!

NEW IN CHESS

Twenty-five-year-old Pentala Harikrishna from India will make his debut in the Tata Steel top group next year.

NOTES BY
Pentala Harikrishna

RL 7.4 – C67
Lazaro Bruzon
Pentala Harikrishna
Wijk aan Zee B 2012

This was my fourth time in Wijk aan Zee. When the lots were drawn, I got number 13, which meant I would get seven blacks and six whites. Like any other player I would have preferred seven whites, of course ☺.

My first game was against Lazaro Bruzon from Cuba. He is a former World Junior Champion and he was the top seed.

1.e4

He plays both 1.d4, 1.e4 and 1.c4, but I had expected him to play 1.d4.

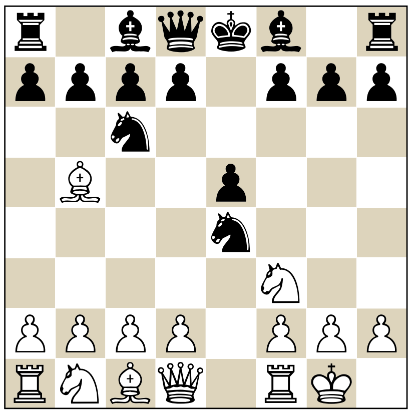
1...e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6

I had been shuffling around with different kinds of Ruy Lopez set-ups before this event. I think he did not expect that I would go for the Berlin Defence, which was introduced to me by my friends Kidambi and Sandipan way back in 2003! I fell in love with this variation at first sight and won my first game easily ☺.

4.0-0

There are many options for White here, such as 4.d3, 4.♘c3 and 4.♕e2.

4...♘xe4



5.d4

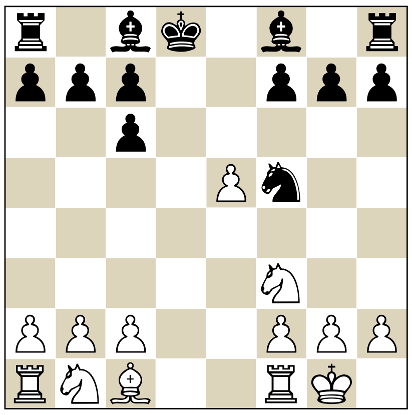
This is the main line. White has also tried 5.♖e1 and 5.♕e2. I think Black is doing fine in both variations.

5...♘d6 6.♗xc6

6.♗a4 is an interesting move, first played by Showalter against Pillsbury in 1897. My friends Sandipan and Surya had analysed this move and found some interesting ideas.

6...dxc6 7.dxe5 ♘f5 8.♕xd8+ ♔xd8

So here we are in the main position of the Berlin Defence. Move orders are very important in this opening.

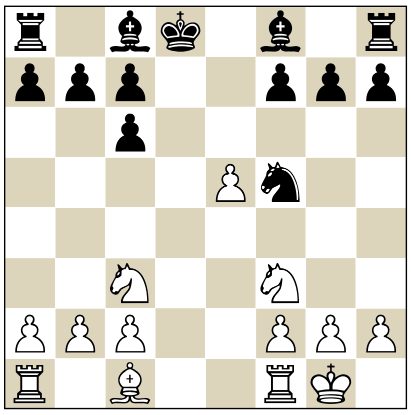


9.♘c3

I prefer this move order, as it gives more flexibility in developing the c1-bishop to b2 or to f4.

9.h3 ♗d7 10.♖d1 (it is necessary to push the king to c8; 10.g4 ♘e7 11.♘g5 ♔e8!) 10...♔c8 11.g4 ♘e7 12.♘g5 ♗e8 happened in my game against Emil Sutovsky from the 2011 World Team Championship in Ningbo (0-1, 59).

The other alternative is 9.♖d1+ ♔e8 10.♘c3 ♘e7 11.h3 ♘g6, and this position, too, is perfectly fine for Black, as White's a1-rook should be on d1!



9...♗d7

There are many set-ups for Black here, and I prefer this one.

9...♗e6, as played by Ivanchuk against Topalov in Wijk aan Zee, is also playable, but Black cannot hope for a win.

The latest trend and the most popular variation at the moment is 9...♔e8 10.h3 h5. Many top level games have been played in this variation, Ivanchuk-Aronian, Tal Memorial 2011, being an instructive example (0-1, 57, see Aronian's notes to this game in New In Chess 2011/8).

10.h3 b6

This is a very useful move. Black is planning to take the king to b7.

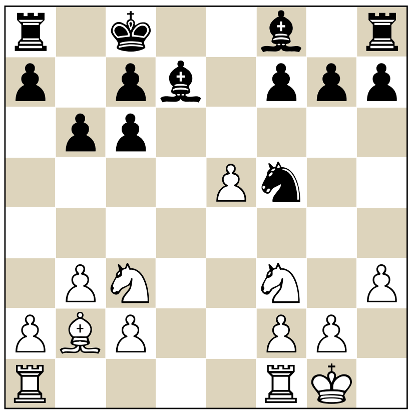
After the direct 10...♔c8 White gets the initiative after 11.g4 ♘e7 12.♘g5 ♗e8 13.f4.

11.b3

Let me give you two more alternatives. To begin with, 11.g4 ♘e7 12.♘g5 ♔e8!. This is the whole idea of 10...b6 – to have the option of ...♔e8.

An interesting idea is 11.a4, as Karjakin played against Kramnik at the 2011 Russian Super Final (1-0, 59). The idea is to weaken the b6-pawn in some long variations. Black's logical reply is 11...a5.

11...♔c8 12.♗b2



12...h5! It is important not to allow White to play g4 and ♘g5.

13.♘g5 White is planning to bring his f3-knight to e4.

13...♗e8 The next few moves are more or less forced.

14.♖ad1 ♗e7 15.♘ge4 ♔b7 16.♖d3 ♖d8 17.♖fd1 ♖xd3 18.♖xd3

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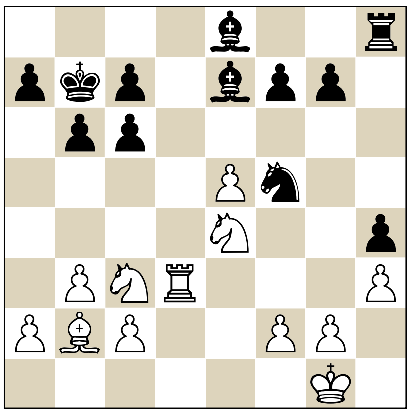
White could get the same position without including h3 and ...h5. This would favour Black, as he will be able to block the advance of White's pawns on the kingside.

18...h4!



19.f3?

In my opinion this move is a serious mistake, giving away many squares and also taking away the f3 square from the rook.

It was better for White to just wait, e.g. 19.♘e2 c5 20.♘2c3 ♗c6 21.♘d5 ♖e8 22.c4, 19.g4 hxg3 20.♘xg3 ♘xg3 21.♖xg3 ♖h7, although this is also slightly better for Black.

19...a5 A standard queenside push in the Berlin Defence.

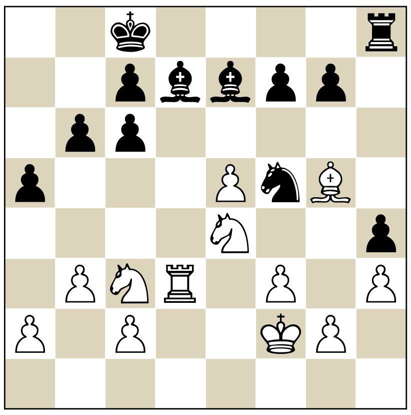
20.♔f2 ♔c8

Also after 20...c5!? 21.♘d5 ♗c6 22.♘xe7 ♘xe7 23.♘g5 ♖f8 White still has problems to solve. Since I had decided to keep as many pieces as possible, I declined this variation.

21.♗c1

My opponent had already consumed a lot of time by now, and he was trying to exchange pieces with ♗g5.

21...♗d7 22.♗g5



22...♗b4!

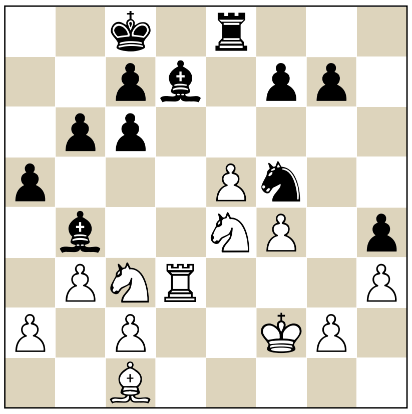
Black should not exchange the dark-squared bishop.

After getting such a nice position I didn't want to play 22...♗a3 23.♘b1 ♗b2 24.c3 ♗e6 25.♖d2 ♗a1!, and put my bishop on a1, although this might have given me a chance to win the best-game prize ☺.

23.♗c1

There was nothing much for the bishop to do on g5, and Black was threatening ...♖e8, after which White would have to play f4 and the bishop would be stuck on g5.

23...♖e8 24.f4



24...♗e7

An interesting idea was 24...♗xc3!? 25.♘xc3 c5 26.♘d5 ♗c6 27.c4 a4 28.♗b2 ♔b7, and then transfer the rook to the queenside.

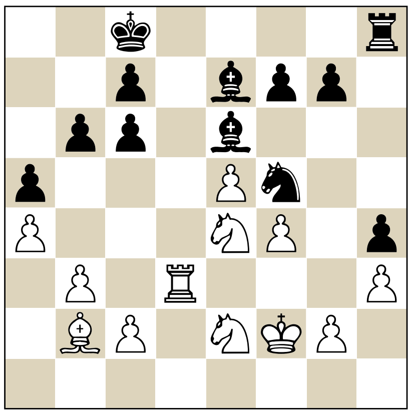
25.♗b2

White should try to exchange some pieces to get some counterplay, for instance by 25.♘d1 c5 26.♘e3 ♘xe3 27.♔xe3, with a black edge.

25...♗e6 26.a4 ♖h8

There is nothing wrong with this move, as White can't improve much.

27.♘e2



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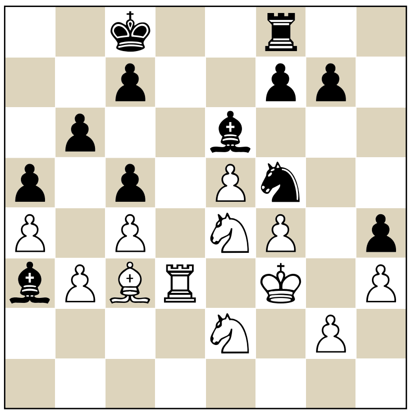
27...♖f8 Better was 27...♖d8 28.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 29.♔f3 c5 30.c4 ♗c8, with some advantage for Black.

28.c4 ♗b4 The start of a wrong plan. Better was 28...b5 29.axb5 cxb5 30.cxb5 ♖d8 31.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 32.♗c3 ♗d5 33.g4 ♗xe4 34.gxf5 ♗xf5 35.♘d4, with equal chances.

29.♗c3 ♗a3 30.♔f3

After 30.♘g1 ♗e7 31.♘f3 White is more or less fine.

30...c5

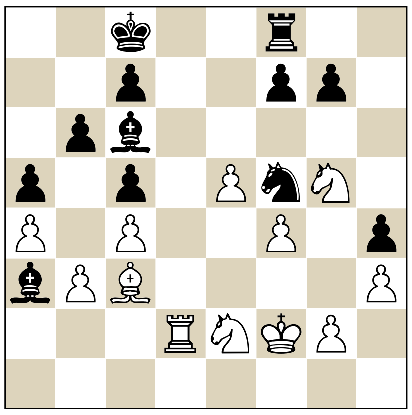


Here I felt that Black had lost the advantage as a result of making too many moves with the rook.

31.♘g5 ♗d7 32.♔f2 ♗c6 33.♖d2?!

My opponent was already in time-trouble, and was hoping to complete his 40 moves and then think of a concrete plan.

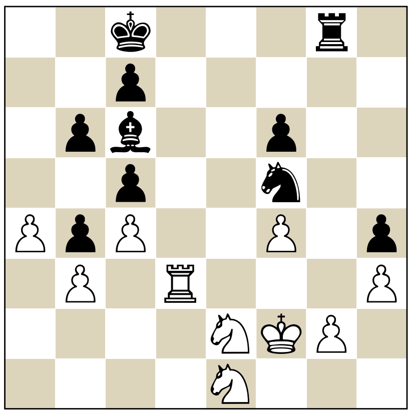
White could have got some chances by playing 33.g4! hxg3+ 34.♘xg3 ♘h4 35.f5 ♗b4 36.♗a1.



33...f6! 34.♘f3 ♔b7 35.exf6 gxf6 36.♖d1 ♗b4 37.♗xb4 axb4 38.♖d3 ♖g8 39.♘e1

I think White should have just waited with ♖d1 and ♖d2 instead of trying to break with g4.

39...♔c8



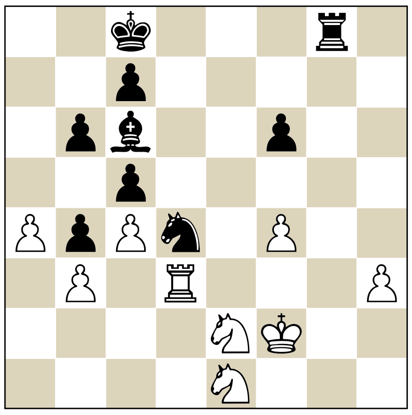
40.g4?!

Here White should have waited with 40.♘f3 instead of removing my only weakness h4.

40...hxg3+ 41.♘xg3 ♘d4

My knight, which was tied up at f5, became free after the swap of my h4-pawn. Now Black is slightly better.

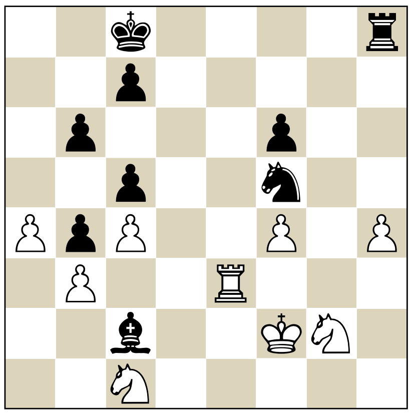
42.♘e2 White should exchange my strong knight on d4.

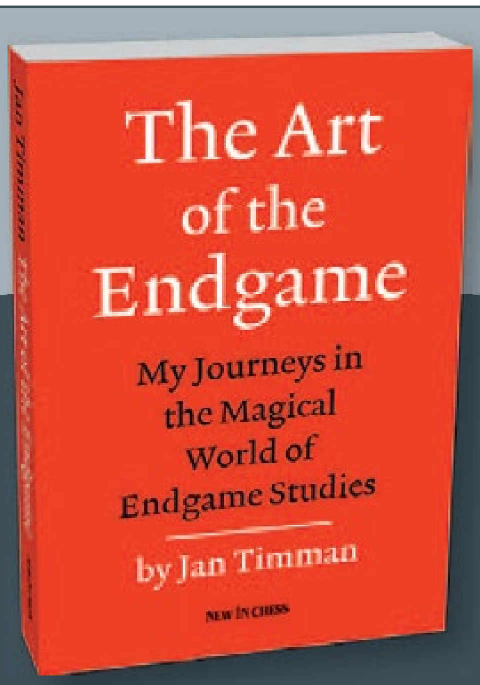


42...♗e4

After 42...♘xe2 43.♔xe2 ♖h8 44.♔f2 ♗d7 45.♔g2 Black is still better, but it is very close to equality.

43.♖e3 ♗f5 44.h4 ♖h8 45.♘g2 ♗c2 46.♘c1 ♘f5





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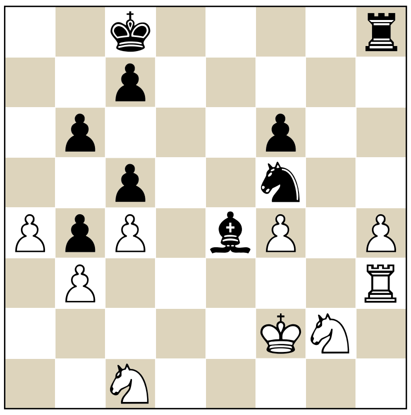
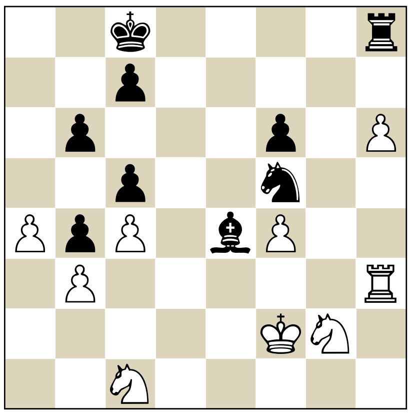
47.♖h3
White will lose the h4-pawn in any case, but with 47.♖e1 he could have gained some tempi: 47...♘xh4 48.♖h1 ♘g6 49.♖xh8+ ♘xh8 50.♘e3 ♗b1 51.♘d5 f5 52.♔e3 ♘f7 – although this position also favours Black.
47...♗e4

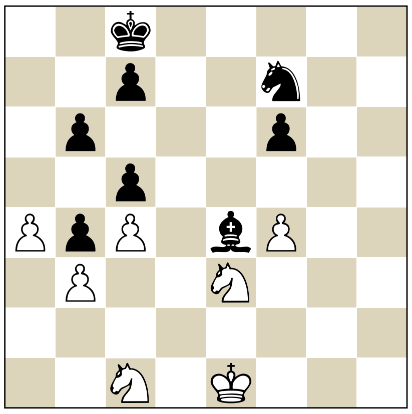


48.h5?!
White should have tried 48.♘e3, as it would have given him some drawing chances: 48...♖xh4 49.♖xh4 ♘xh4 50.♘g4 ♘f5 51.♘xf6 ♗c2 52.♘d5 ♘d4 53.f5 ♗xf5 54.♘e7+ ♔d7 55.♘xf5 ♘xf5 56.♔f3, and I was under the impression that this position is won for Black, but White will save himself by sacrificing his knight on c5 and keeping the balance thanks to his passed a-pawn.
48...♘g7 49.h6 ♘f5

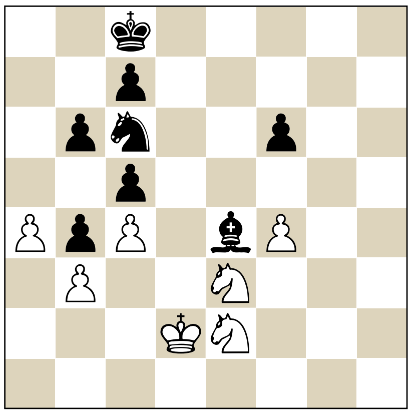


50.♘e3
The difference compared to 48.♘e3 is that now my knight is not stuck on h4 and will go ...g8-e7-c6-a5 or ....f7-d8-c6 and ...a5.
50...♖xh6 51.♖xh6 ♘xh6 52.♔e1 ♘f7

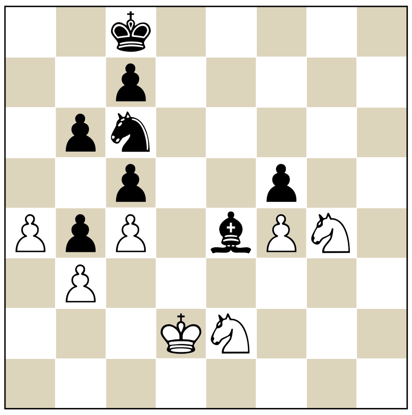
Wijk aan Zee B 2012					**cat. XV**	
						TPR
1	**Pentala Harikrishna**	IGM	IND	2665	**9**	**2739**
2	**Alexander Motylev**	IGM	RUS	2677	**8½**	**2707**
3	**Lazaro Bruzon**	IGM	CUB	2691	**8½**	**2706**
4	**Erwin l'Ami**	IGM	NED	2596	**8**	**2690**
5	**Sergei Tiviakov**	IGM	NED	2677	**8**	**2684**
6	**Dimitri Reinderman**	IGM	NED	2581	**7½**	**2661**
7	**Illya Nyzhnyk**	IGM	UKR	2568	**7½**	**2662**
8	**Vladimir Potkin**	IGM	RUS	2684	**6½**	**2596**
9	**Jan Timman**	IGM	NED	2571	**6**	**2576**
10	**Sipke Ernst**	IGM	NED	2606	**5**	**2515**
11	**Kateryna Lahno**	IGM	UKR	2557	**4½**	**2496**
12	**Daniele Vocaturo**	IGM	ITA	2545	**4½**	**2497**
13	**Victoria Cmilyte**	IGM	LTU	2503	**4**	**2469**
14	**Harika Dronavalli**	IGM	IND	2516	**3½**	**2434**



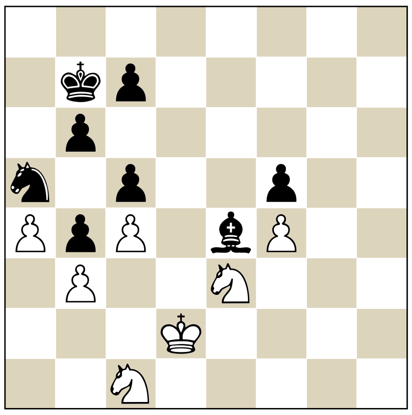
53.♘e2 I think the knight will have to go back to c1, which is why it was better for White to try and get some counterplay with 53.♘g4: after 53...f5 54.♘f6 ♗a8 55.♘h7 ♘d8 56.♘g5 ♘c6 57.♘f3 ♘a5 58.♘e5 ♗e4 59.♔d2 ♔b7 we've reached a position similar to the game.
53...♘d8 This is the simplest way to victory – to take the knight to a5.
54.♔d2 ♘c6



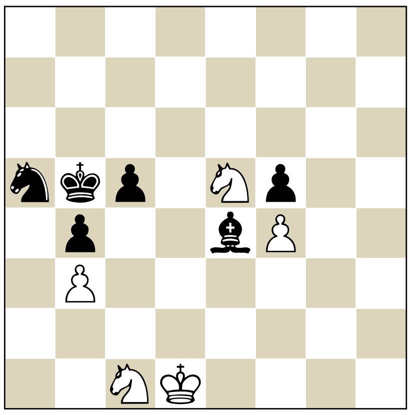
55.♘g4?
White should have tried 55.♘g3 to bring the knights into play – 55...♗f3 56.♘ef5 ♘a5 57.♔c2 ♔d7 58.♘h4 ♗g4 – although here, too, he will suffer.
55...f5
This move doesn't spoil much, but there was a simpler win: 55...♗f3! 56.♘xf6 ♗xe2 57.♔xe2 ♘d4+ 58.♔d3 ♘xb3 59.♘d5 ♘d4, etc.



56.♘e3? Now the white knight is placed badly on e3.
The correct move was 56.♘e5! ♘a5 57.♘c1 ♔b7 58.♘f7 ♗b1 59.♘g5 c6 60.♘e6, and White offers some resistance, because now it is not easy to push ...b5 as in the game.
56...♘a5 57.♘c1 ♔b7



White is totally lost. Black plays ...c6 and ...b5, and the b3-pawn will gradually fall.
58.♘d1 c6 59.♘f2 ♗b1 60.♘fd3 ♔a6
60...♗xd3! would have won immediately: 61.♔xd3 b5 62.axb5 cxb5 63.cxb5 ♔b6 64.♔c2 ♔xb5 65.♘e2 c4 66.bxc4+ ♔xc4 67.♘g3 b3+ 68.♔b2 ♔b4.
61.♘e5 b5 62.axb5+ cxb5 63.cxb5+ ♔xb5 64.♔d1 ♗e4
A waiting move. I wanted to play ...c4 when his king was on d2.



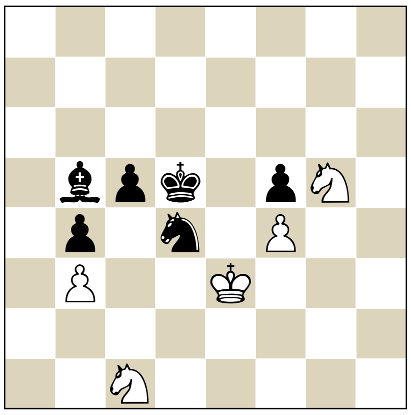
65.♘f7 After 65.♔d2 Black wins with 65...c4 66.bxc4+ ♘xc4+ 67.♔d1 ♘xe5 68.fxe5 ♔c5.

65...♔c6

I saw a clear win by taking the king to d5, the knight to d4 and the bishop to c2. White loses a pawn.

66.♔d2 ♔d5 67.♘g5 ♗b1 68.♔d1 ♘c6 69.♘e2 ♗d3 Forcing White to play his knight back to c1.

70.♘c1 ♗b5 71.♔d2 ♘d4 72.♔e3

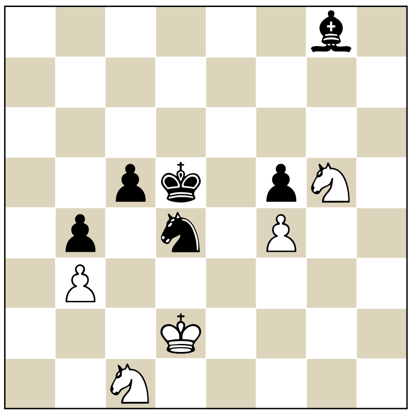


72...♗e8 Here 72...c4 was winning, but I wanted to take the b3-pawn ☺.

73.♔d2 ♗h5 Again a waiting move. I want to go to the g8-a2 diagonal.

74.♘h7 Or 74.♔e1 ♗f3 75.♔d2 ♗e4, and the pawn will be rounded up.

74...♗f7 75.♘g5 ♗g8



Finally my bishop had reached its destiny!!

76.♔e3 ♔d6 77.♘f3 ♘xb3 78.♘e2 ♗e6 79.♘g3 ♔d5

White resigned.

This win gave me more confidence, and I started with 3/3. After 10 rounds I was leading by a full point. However, when I was set to become champion, I made a crazy decision in my game against Sipke Ernst when I played for a win instead of giving a perpetual. Next I made solid draws against Motylev and Reinderman to take first place. L'Ami could not catch me, as he lost to Potkin in the last round.

NOTES BY

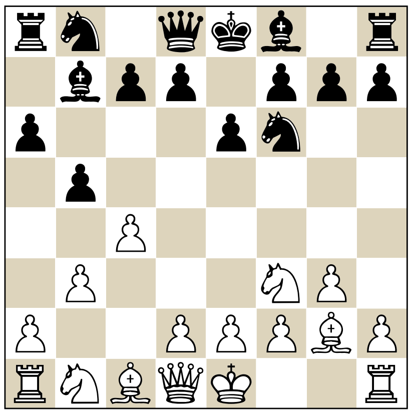
Maxim Turov

EO 64.8 – A13
Baskaran Adhiban
Maxim Turov
Wijk aan Zee C 2012 (12)

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 a6!?

If Black does not want to play the Catalan (after 3...d5) or the Queen's Indian (after 3...b6), then 3...a6 is virtually the only possibility of obtaining a non-banal position.

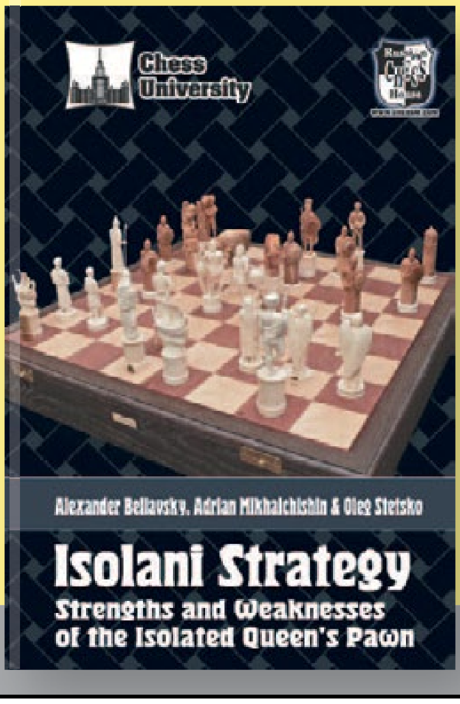
4.♗g2 b5 5.b3 ♗b7



6.♘c3!

The accurate move order. After 6.0-0 c5 7.♘c3 ♕b6 8.e3 ♘c6 9.♕e2 ♘a7!? Black maintains the tension on the queenside and achieves a perfectly good game.

6...b4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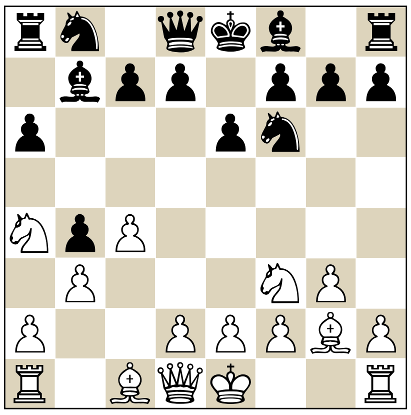
Forced – after 6...bxc4?! 7.bxc4, despite the symmetrical pawn structure, the position is in White's favour, since he gains the b-file, and – as a bonus – a couple of tempi by attacking the bishop on b7.

7.♘a4

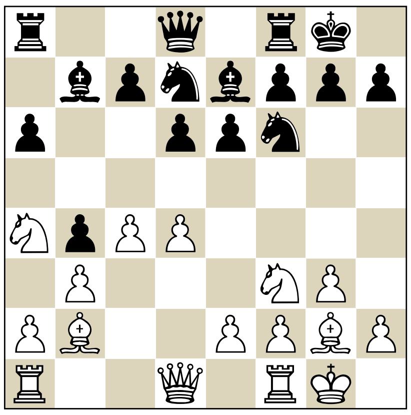


7...♗e7

After the weak 7...d5? 8.cxd5 Black's pawn structure is compromised.

7...c5?! is quite possible, but very passive: 8.0-0 d6 9.d4 ♘bd7 10.dxc5! dxc5 11.♗f4 ♗e7 12.a3 a5 13.♖a2!, intending 14.♖d2 with unpleasant pressure. However, the assessment of the position has not gone beyond 'minimal advantage for White'.

7...d6 is the most usual and natural move in this position. After 8.0-0 ♘bd7 9.d4 ♗e7 10.♗b2 0-0 the critical position of the variation is reached.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Attempts to immediately refute Black's strategy do not succeed:

A) 11.d5!? exd5 12.♘h4 c5! 13.cxd5 ♖e8 14.♖e1 ♗f8 15.e4 g6, with a very complicated position but Black's chances are by no means worse;

B) 11.♖c1 ♗e4 12.c5?! ♕b8, with the idea of 13...♕b5, and Black has a very promising game;

C) 11.♘e1 does not claim to be a refutation, but it is possible that White does not have anything better: 11...♗xg2 12.♔xg2 c5 13.dxc5 dxc5 14.♘d3 ♕c7 with equal chances.

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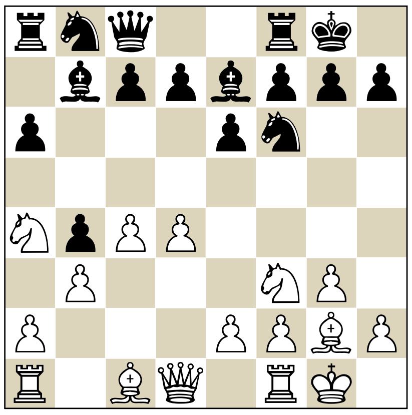
8.d4 0-0 9.0-0 ♕c8?!

A fanciful idea, which occurred to me at the board. I was curious to find out what would happen after 10.♘c5...

9...d6 transposes into the positions after 7...d6. That is what I should have played.



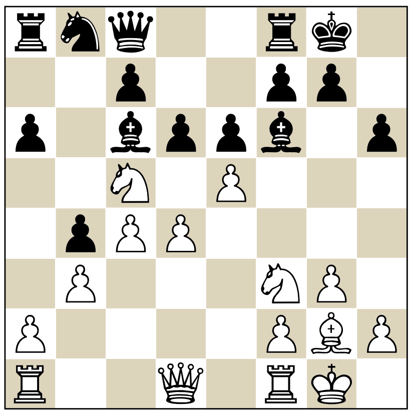
10.♗g5

Too modest. Much better was 10.♘c5! ♗xc5 11.dxc5 a5 12.♗b2 ♘e4 13.♕d4 f6. During the game this position seemed attractive to me. Alas, after 14.♕e3 ♘a6 15.c6! ♗xc6 16.♘d4 White has a big advantage. Instead of 10...♗xc5 stronger is 10...♗c6, but, of course, the transference of the knight from a4 to d3 is certainly not what Black has been trying to achieve. The assessment of the position is obvious – White has a small, but very comfortable advantage.

10...h6 11.♗xf6 ♗xf6 12.♘c5 ♗c6 13.e4!

After 13.e3 d6 14.♘d3 ♕b7 15.♘fe1 ♗xg2 16.♘xg2 c5 Black has a slight advantage.

13...d6 14.e5

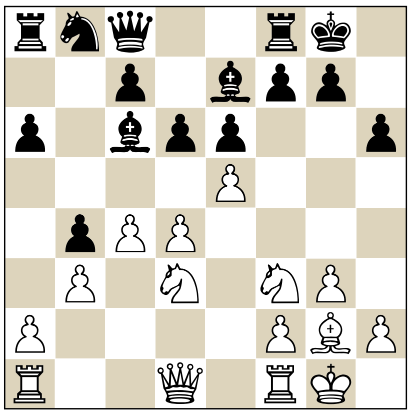


14...♗e7?!

Avoiding simplification. This would have been logical if Black could have freely completed his development.

After 14...dxe5 15.♘xe5 ♗xe5 16.dxe5 ♖d8 17.♕g4 ♗xg2 18.♔xg2 ♘d7 it would be time to agree a draw.

15.♘d3



15...d5??

I made this suicidal move on noticing that after the natural 15...♕b7 16.♖c1 ♘d7? (16...a5 is better) 17.d5 exd5 18.♘d4 White wins.

Black's problems are also not solved by 15...a5 16.d5 exd5 17.♘d4 ♗b7 18.cxd5 dxe5 19.♘xe5.

16.♘f4!

It is amazing, but I overlooked this simple and natural reply.

Weaker is 16.cxd5 ♗xd5 17.♘f4 c6!, when Black is more or less alright.

16...dxc4 17.bxc4 ♖d8

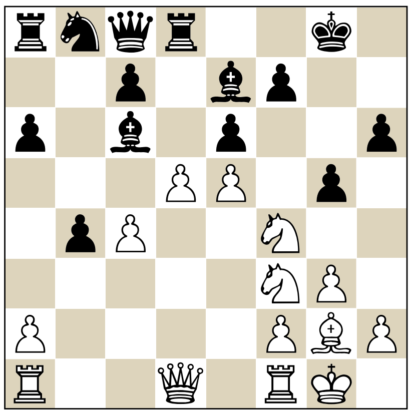
It is hard to suggest anything better. After any move there follows d5, and Black's position becomes hopeless.

18.d5 g5!?

18...exd5 19.e6! and all White's minor pieces assail the undefended black king. 18...♗e8 is objectively stronger but after 19.♘d4 Black has no counterplay at all.

Wijk aan Zee C 2012 cat. IX

						TPR
1	Maxim Turov	IGM	RUS	2645	10½	2690
2	Hans Tikkanen	IGM	SWE	2549	10	2658
3	Daan Brandenburg	IGM	NED	2527	8½	2558
4	Baskaran Adhiban	IGM	IND	2561	8½	2556
5	Sahaj Grover	IM	IND	2532	7	2477
6	Matthew Sadler	IGM	ENG	2660	7	2467
7	Elisabeth Pähtz	IM	GER	2454	7	2483
8	Tania Sachdev	IM	IND	2411	6	2428
9	Elina Danielian	IGM	ARM	2490	5½	2394
10	Etienne Goudriaan	FM	NED	2279	5	2380
11	Lars Ootes	-	NED	2326	4½	2354
12	Pieter Hopman	-	NED	2342	4	2322
13	Lisa Schut	WIM	NED	2290	4	2326
14	Anne Haast	WIM	NED	2290	3½	2292



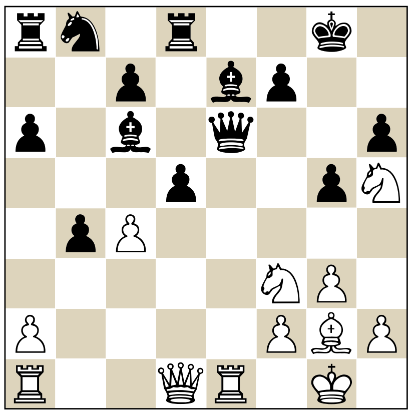
19.♘h5?!

When I played 18...g5 I saw the winning 19.♘d4!, but I decided to tempt fate. Indeed after 19.♘d4 gxf4 20.♕g4+ ♔h8 21.♕xf4 ♗g5 22.♕xf7 ♗e8 23.♕xe6 White has three central pawns and a fearfully strong attack for the sacrificed piece.

19...exd5 20.e6?!

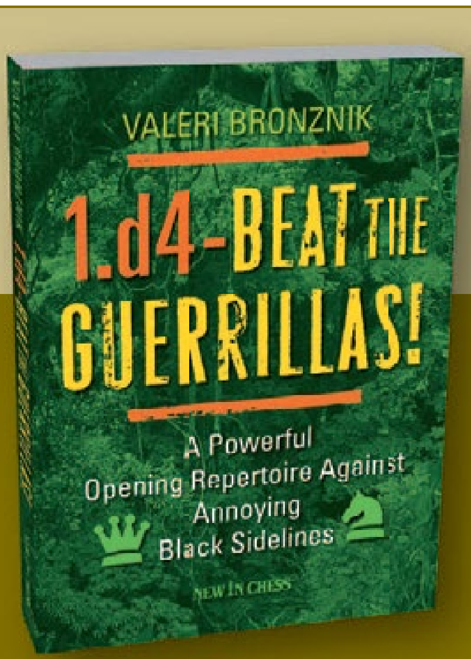
Again stronger was 20.♘d4!: 20...dxc4 21.♗xc6 ♘xc6 22.♘xc6 ♖xd1 23.♘xe7+ ♔f8 24.♘xc8 ♖xa1 25.♖xa1 ♖xc8, although now it is not easy to demonstrate an advantage for White. For example, the attempt to quickly bring the h5-knight back into play leads to a draw: 26.♖d1 (26.♘f6 ♖d8) 26...b3! 27.axb3 cxb3 28.♘f6 c5 29.♖d7! c4 30.e6 fxe6 31.♘h7+ with perpetual check.

20...♕xe6 21.♖e1



21...dxc4! My opponent overlooked this move when he played 19.♘h5.

22.♕c1 More problems are posed by 22.♕b1! ♕d6! (now Black loses after 22...♕g6 23.♖xe7 ♕xh5 24.♘e5 ♗xg2 25.♔xg2 ♕e2 26.♕f5) 23.♘e5 ♗xg2 24.♘xf7! ♕d3 (the only move) 25.♘xd8 ♕xb1 26.♖axb1 ♗xd8 27.♔xg2 ♘c6 28.♖bd1 a5 29.♖d7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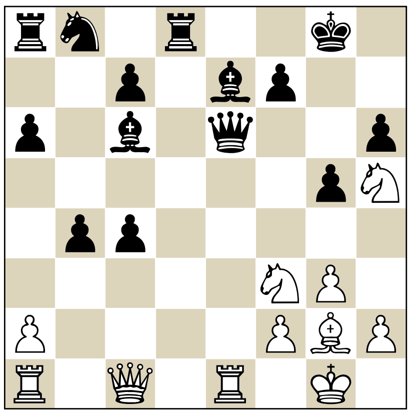
♘e7, when Black holds the position, albeit with difficulty.
On 22.♕c2? there follows 22...♕g6, winning.

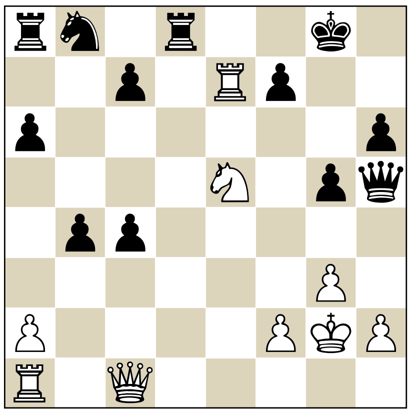


22...♕f5! Bad is 22...♕g6? 23.♘e5 ♕xh5 24.g4! ♕h4 25.♕xc4 winning.

23.♖e5

After 23.♖xe7 ♗xf3 24.♕xc4 ♗xg2 25.♔xg2 c5 White has good compensation for the sacrificed material, but not more.

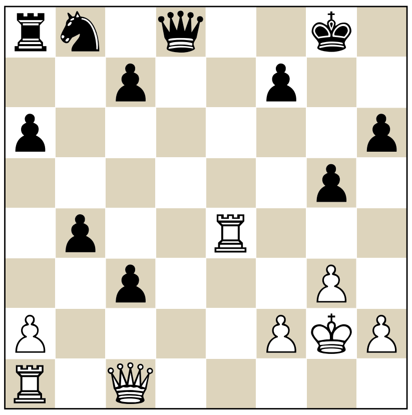
23...♕g6 24.♖xe7 ♕xh5 25.♘e5 ♗xg2 26.♔xg2



Compared with the variation given in the note to White's 22nd move, the white queen stands at c1 and it cannot reach f5.

26...♕e2 27.♘c6 ♕d3 28.♘xd8 ♕xd8 29.♖e4 c3

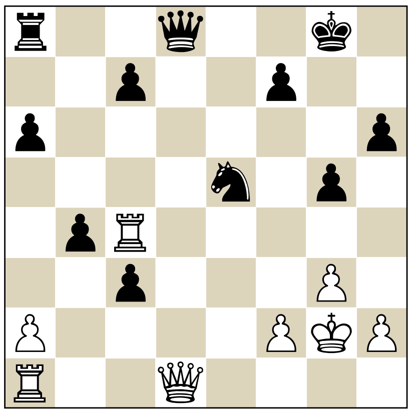
As a result of a lengthy series of forced moves, the position has simplified significantly.



30.♕d1?

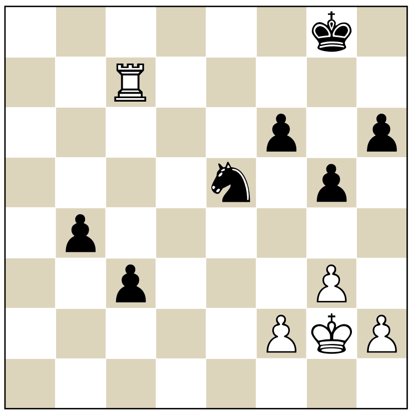
Possibly my opponent overlooked 31...♘e5. There was no other reason to avoid 30.♖xb4 ♘c6 31.♖e4 ♕d5 32.f3 ♖d8! 33.♕xc3 ♕d2+ 34.♕xd2 ♖xd2+ 35.♔g1 ♘d4 36.♖f1 c5 37.♖f2 ♖d3, and in this complicated endgame the chances are roughly equal.

30...♘c6 31.♖c4 ♘e5



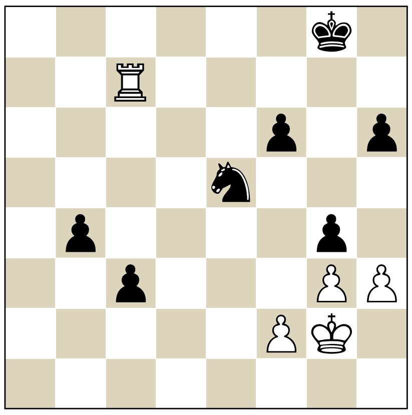
32.♕xd8+? After 32.♖xb4 ♕xd1 33.♖xd1 c2 34.♖f1 c5! White retains saving chances with 35.♖b2 c1♕ 36.♖xc1 ♘d3 37.♖bc2 ♘xc1 38.♖xc1 ♖c8 39.♔f3.

32...♖xd8 33.♖c5 f6 34.a3 a5 35.axb4 axb4 36.♖xc7 ♖d7 37.♖aa7 ♖xc7 38.♖xc7



38...g4 38...♘d3! 39.♔f1 ♘c1 40.♔e1 ♘a2 would have been a pretty conclusion.

39.h3 The pawn endgame after 39.♔f1 ♘f3 40.♔e2 c2 41.♖xc2 ♘d4+ 42.♔d3 ♘xc2 43.♔xc2 ♔f7 is easily won by playing the king to g2.



39...♘d3! But here after the impulsive 39...h5? 40.hxg4 hxg4 41.♔f1 ♘f3 42.♔e2 c2 43.♖xc2 ♘d4+ 44.♔d3 ♘xc2 45.♔xc2 the pawn endgame is now drawn!

40.♔f1 gxh3 41.♔g1 ♘e1 42.♔h2 c2 43.♔xh3 b3

White resigned. ■

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Andrei Filatov

‘I would like this match to become the event of the year’

The World Championship match between Vishy Anand and Boris Gelfand will start on May 10 in Moscow. The venue is the Tretyakov Gallery, the national treasury of Russian art and one of the finest museums in the world. The prize-fund is a whopping $2,550,000, to be split 60-40 between the winner and the loser. The initiator of this spectacular marriage between chess and the arts, and its financial backer, is 40-year-old Russian billionaire Andrei Filatov, co-owner of the N-Trans Group, a consortium of companies specializing in infrastructure. Although he once dreamt of a career in chess, Filatov is little known in chess circles. **Mark Glukhovsky**, editor-in-chief of 64, talked to an ardent art lover who stresses the cultural value of chess and sees great opportunities for his favourite game if its infrastructure is improved.

Andrei Filatov: 'Anand's vast world championship match experience will play in his favour, while Gelfand's strength will be his motivation.'

The Tretyakov Gallery will be the venue of the 2012 World Championship match.

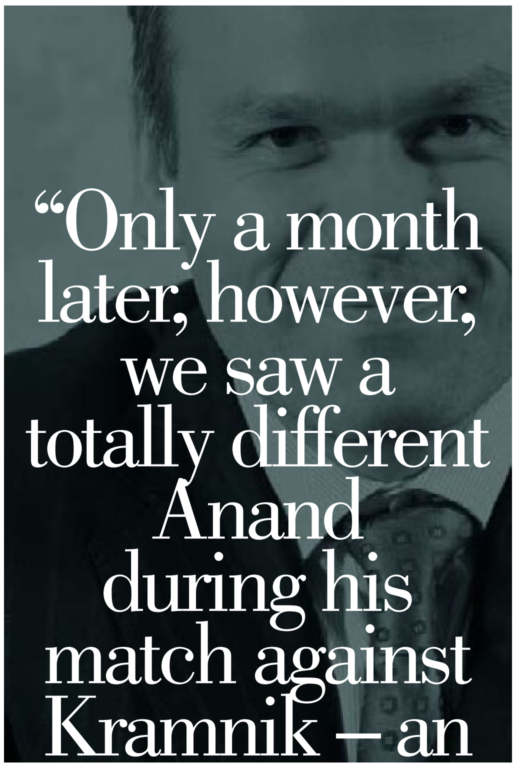
In May last year, in the aftermath of the Candidates' matches, sceptics predicted that FIDE would face great difficulties in finding a sponsor for the Anand-Gelfand match. However, there immediately was interest, and from more than one place, too, as the Indian city of Chennai competed with Moscow for the right to organize the match. Exactly what motivated you to become the match sponsor?

'I believe that these sceptics underestimated the power of the World Championship Match brand. Throughout its history of more than 130 years, the championship match has invariably been a fascinating event widely covered by the global mass media as headline news. Therefore, this project is very attractive from an advertising point of view.

'At the same time, my ambitions with regard to this project have been much broader. There is chess as a sport in which Russian players have been historically holding leading positions. There is Moscow, which can rightfully claim the title of the world's chess capital, regardless of a somewhat declining mass interest in the game over the recent decades. And there is Russian art and unique Russian museum collections. What really interests me as a sponsor is the promotion of these different aspects. And while I cannot speak for the Indian organizers, I did not have a shadow of doubt when putting forward the prize-fund and proposing to cover the match costs. I am convinced that this is a fantastic and reasonably priced event in terms of the balance between my objectives and the event's PR potential. That's why I am delighted that Moscow has ultimately won the bid.'

It appears that some strange manoeuvring preceded this win. First, the FIDE website announced that the match would be held in Moscow, only to remove the announcement shortly afterwards. The day after, however, Kirsan Ilyumzhinov confirmed that the match would indeed take place in the Russian capital. Could you tell us exactly what was going on and why the Russian bid has ultimately won?

'I am not aware of this and therefore cannot comment on the FIDE website. It is clear to me though that the Moscow bid offered certain advantages, the main of which was neutrality. In my view, a neutral country bidding for the right to organize a match is by default much better positioned to win. Other strengths of Moscow include the vast experience of the Russian Chess Federation in organizing top events, as well as a wonderful, qualified and sophisticated chess audience. No proper World Championship Match has been held in Moscow in more than 30 years now. I thought that the chess fans in Moscow have been waiting for way too long and gladly decided to satisfy the public demand for the match. In addition, a match of this level invariably stimulates interest in chess in any country. I hope the match will play a similar role in Russia and help chess regain the strong position it had in the past.'



> "Only a month later, however, we saw a totally different Anand during his match against Kramnik – an Anand who was precise, ruthless and powerful – a real champion."

Aren't you afraid that the match may turn out to be not particularly exciting? Both the World Champion and his challenger were not, to put it mildly, particularly brilliant during the last Tal Memorial. The tournament was essentially disputed by much younger players who could be the champion's and the challenger's sons.

'Well, as we both know, both the champion's and the challenger's sons are much younger: they are not even a year old! An exciting feature of chess is that you can play and win games against your children and grandchildren alike, and Viktor Kortchnoi is a good example. I believe that one or even several tournament results are not crucial. The grandmasters are already in training mode. A World Championship Match represents the crown achievement in any chess player's career. Therefore, while younger players set tournament records, the champion and the challenger are focused on their own specific objectives.

'Just look at the history of Anand's tournament results before his championship matches. In 2008, Bilbao saw one of his poorest tournament performances ever, when he finished in last place. Only a month later, however, we saw a totally different Anand during his match against Kramnik – an Anand who was precise, ruthless and powerful – a real champion. I believe both grandmasters will be in optimal shape by next May. Age offers its advantages, including an experience-driven capacity to completely mobilize one's resources at the right moment.'

Could you share your opinion about the match participants, their strengths and shortcomings?

'It is difficult for me to discuss Anand's strengths, mainly because he does not appear to have shortcomings. A grandmaster, a multiple world champion – what else can one say? As for Boris Gelfand, I know him much better. He is a player of great depth: interesting, talented and resourceful. I would expect a match on an equal footing. Anand's vast world championship match experience will play in his favour, while Gelfand's strength will be his motivation. The upcoming world championship match will be Vishy's fourth and Boris's first.'

CHESS-NEWS.RU

At the Tal Memorial Ilya Levitov, the managing director of the Russian chess federation introduced Andrei Filatov to Vishy Anand and his wife Aruna.

A rhetorical question perhaps. It is no secret that you and Boris Gelfand are old friends. Are you going to support him?

'I have been invariably supporting Boris before this match and will continue to do so in the future, as we are indeed old friends. However, this one time, despite our friendship, I will be supporting the entire match, and not an individual player. I would like this match to become "the event of the year". I am pinning high hopes on the players, and am convinced that they will deliver a fascinating match. I am also certain that the Organizing Committee will do their best for this match to go down in history as a commendable successor of the great matches of the past. The Organizing Committee has not yet been finalized but we have a lot of ideas, which I hope will please the chess community. We will try to demonstrate that chess can be attractive. I am convinced that this match will support chess development both in Russia and globally.'

Aren't you afraid of too many draws?

'No, I am not. A draw is one of the three standard game outcomes. Just remember the Capablanca-Alekhine or Kasparov-Karpov matches, which were heart-pounding and exciting despite many draws. What counts is the quality of the game. Take Petrosian, for example: all his draws notwithstanding, who will argue that he wasn't a great champion?'

To which extent is Moscow really neutral ground? Even though formally Boris Gelfand represents Israel, his native language is Russian and he has many friends and supporters in Moscow...

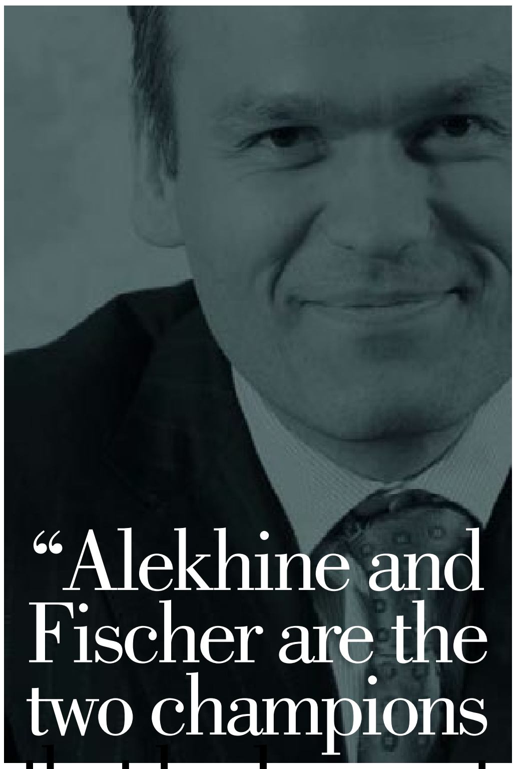
'I do not doubt Moscow's total neutrality. The fact that Vishy does not speak Russian may even play in his favour, as he will be less distracted by what's being said around him. It might be actually more difficult for him to play in his native India. In any case, Anand played in Moscow many times before, perhaps more often than Gelfand. He knows the Moscow audience very well and has not expressed any dissatisfaction with our winning bid. On the contrary, he (just like Gelfand) was very excited about the choice of the Tretyakov Gallery as the match venue. One of the best museums both in Russia and in the world, the Gallery offers an outstanding art collection and boasts a very rich history.

'The State Tretyakov Gallery embodies the history of both Russian culture and Russian arts patronage. Pavel Tretyakov set out to collect paintings in the mid-1850s, with the original intention to donate his collection to society. Fifteen years later, the Gallery opened to the public, while in 1892 the collection became public property when Pavel Tretyakov gave it to the City of Moscow. We now witness this amazing Russian tradition re-emerge, as prosperous individuals extend their focus to the public good.'

Was it your idea to hold the match in the museum?

'Yes, the idea was mine. I am simply convinced that chess is much closer to culture than generally thought. In recent years, the sports component has been prevailing in the perception of chess. I don't think this is totally right. Chess has a great history and is deeply linked with many art attributes. In chess, you may lose a tournament but leave future generations an outstanding game – a work that will outlive you and go down in history. From this point of view, chess is more of an art form than a sport.

'Many outstanding artists highly esteem and respect chess. By holding the match in a museum we are attempting to emphasize the link between our favourite game and the arts, as well as pay tribute to the memory of great Russian artists in the broadest sense, including painters, writers, composers and musicians. Did you know that Turgenev, Tolstoy, Goldenweiser, Prokofiev, Oistrakh and Shostakovich all showed a strong interest in chess? Chess is very deeply rooted in Russian culture. Count Tolstoy met Prince Urusov back during the Crimean war and they spent a lot of time playing chess! Urusov was a strong player and mostly outplayed the count, but Tolstoy learned much from him, later describing the experience in his memoirs. That was almost two centuries ago, in 1854! Chess in Russia has a rich and glorious history. I hope that the match will benefit not only chess but also Russian culture and history. I would also be happy to see a revival of interest in Russian culture and history in the West, as they are most definitely worth it.’



“Alekhine and Fischer are the two champions that had a great influence on me. I admired their amazing self-belief and dedication.”

Speaking of history, it is known that you commissioned the restoration of the memorial monument to Alekhine in Paris…
‘There is not really much to talk about. I happened to see on TV that the monument had been seriously damaged during a hurricane and was in a pitiful condition... That’s all there is to it.’

My question was not about the financial aspect. I understand it is not very costly to restore a tombstone. I wanted to know what Alekhine represents for you?
‘This is an interesting question, as I am truly interested in the history of Russia. The heavy hand of history can clearly be discerned in the destiny of this genius. To me, his life epitomizes Russian history of the first half of the 20th century, with all its tragedy, bloodshed and grandeur. Alekhine carried his incredible talent through all the hardships, achieved his great goal, won two world championships and died undefeated. He had a very strong spirit, which couldn’t be said about his body. He had a truly Russian character: contradictory, explosive, sometimes complicated, yet amazingly goal-oriented at the same time.’

Can you say he was an iconic player for you when you started playing chess?
‘Alekhine and Fischer are the two champions that had a great influence on me. I admired their amazing self-belief and dedication.’

Can you tell us a few words about your own chess career? Where did you practise and why did you stop?
‘I followed a path that was typical for a Soviet youth: playing chess at a Children’s Sports School, becoming a Candidate Master and eventually entering the Chess Faculty of the Minsk Physical Culture and Sports Academy. There I met Susan Polgar, Boris Gelfand and Ilya Smirin. I dreamt of a career as a chess player, coach or referee. To me, nothing was more appealing at the time than travelling to tournaments and doing what I liked most. Soon, however, the borders opened and then the Soviet Union collapsed, which created new opportunities in a new world.’

Was that the reason why your name now appears in finance magazine rankings rather than those of FIDE? By the way, what is your current ranking among the wealthiest Russians?
‘If you saw the ranking, you might have noticed one more digit next to my name. That digit is zero, which basically means that together with my partners we started our business from scratch, with no connections within the Party or the Komsomol, or participation in infamous loans-for-share auctions. To me, this digit is much more significant than the ranking position. (Estimated at a net worth of $ 1,1 billion, Andrei Filatov is ranked 84th on Forbes list of richest Russians and number 1057 worldwide – ed.)’

Can you say that chess helped you build a successful business? Or, to the contrary, that you stopped at the right moment?
‘It did help. Chess develops a structured approach to thinking, rapid decision-making and a certain mental courage. All these qualities have been very helpful. At the same time, I will never know where I would be now if I had turned out to be a more talented chess player and tried to pursue my chess career.’

Are there any similarities between your current business area and chess?
‘There are, even though they may appear far-fetched. Together with my partners we are focused on infrastructure projects: bridges, roads, freight transportation, ports, railways. At some point I realized that Russia lacked quality infrastructure, and launched myself in the sector. I was aware of the long-term nature of the challenges and the significant scope of the needs in the sector. The same applies to chess, which in my view suffers from a lack of quality infrastructure. As soon as such an infrastructure is in place, chess will make a great leap forward, just like other sports did in the past.’ ■

Charles Hertan

Forcing Moves

Lasker's Legacy (2)

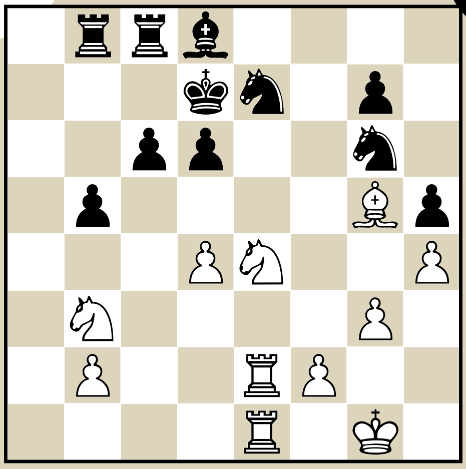
The fairy tale of chess lore calls Steinitz the 'father of positional play', and his nemesis Lasker a shrewd psychologist; but over 36 match games the younger German exposed the artificial streak in Wilhelm's play. What the 1st World Champion really fathered was strategic play. His contorted, yet resilient defensive schemes were a perfect foil to the crude excesses of romanticism. Like his stylistic heir Botvinnik, Steinitz' true genius was an ability to steer the struggle into complex, tight terrain where his preparation dominated. Lasker was first to match the Austrian's phenomenal fighting spirit, but he also brought a more 'modern', well-rounded positional sense, better suited to a broad range of situations. He was equally adept at classical openings, which he tried to inject with some dynamic imbalance; or aggressive positional play on either side of a Sicilian, for example. (Tellingly, he also defeated Steinitz on both sides of isolated queen pawn positions.) If Tarrasch was Steinitz' star disciple, Lasker might be regarded as heir to the true father of sharp positional play: Paul Morphy.

For each problem, the goal is to find the quickest and clearest winning line unless otherwise noted. A 'winning line' could range from checkmate, to being a pawn up with no objective compensation for the opponent.

Level of difficulty:
1-4 stars, 1 is 'easiest' and 4 'most difficult'. The star rating refers to the difficulty of finding all the relevant variations, not just finding the right key move.

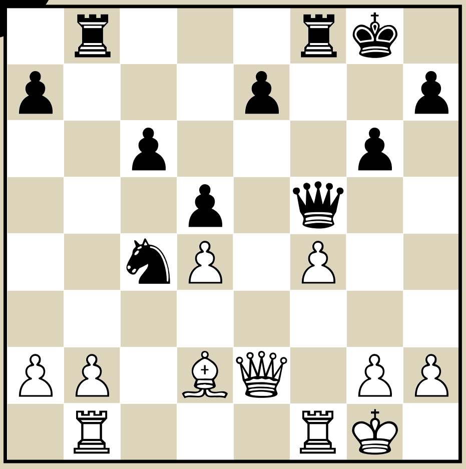
Solutions on page 75

1 ★★⯪☆



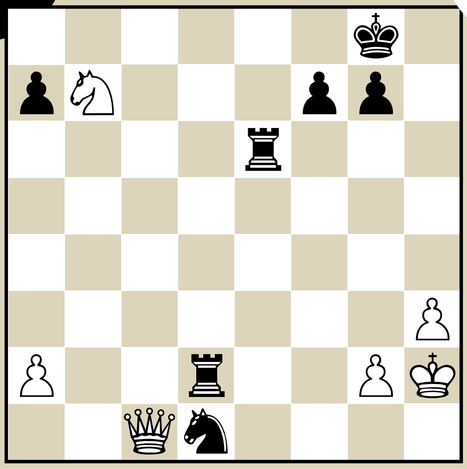
White to move and win

2 ★★★★



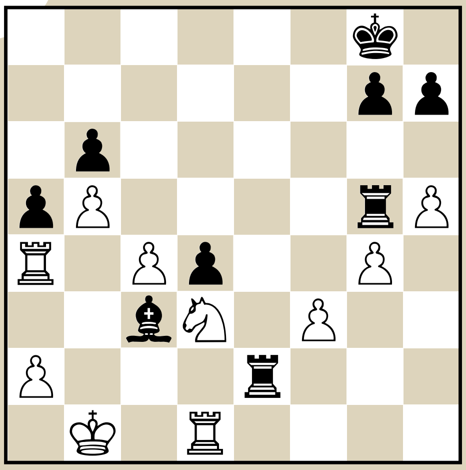
Black to move and gain a concrete edge

3 ★⯪☆☆



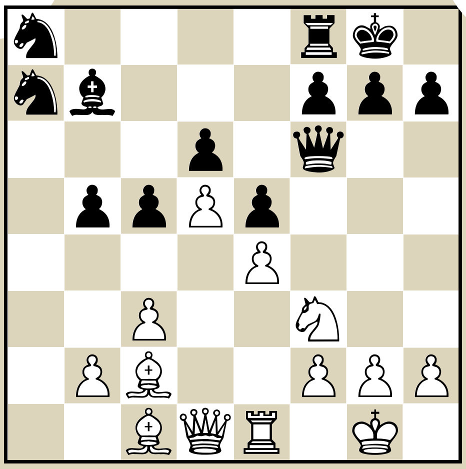
Black to move and win

4 ★★★☆



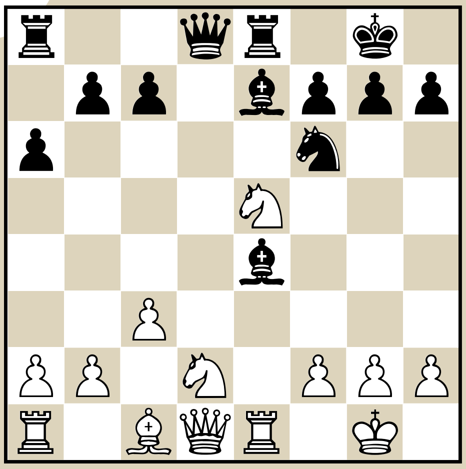
White to move and win

5 ★☆☆☆



White to move and win

6 ★★★☆



White to move and win

‘Did Cleopatra play chess?’

The life and loves of Lisa Lane

Former US women’s champion Lisa Lane will go down in the Hall of Fame as one of a very select group of players who have succeeded in drawing chess out of the shadows and into the full glare of mainstream media publicity. In the 1960s, Lisa’s striking good looks, lively personality and stormy temperament made her a favourite with the press as well as the chess community itself. She even appeared on the front cover of the iconic American magazine *Sports Illustrated*. **Jimmy Adams** portrays a remarkable woman, a chess diva, who made newspaper headlines after withdrawing from the 1961/62 Hastings tournament because she was too much in love to concentrate on her games...

‘She is not a good-looking woman who happens to play chess; she is a chess player who happens to be a good-looking woman. She is a pixie with a high IQ…’

At the time Lisa Lane was hailed as 'The Bobby Fischer of Women's Chess' – and with good reason. Like Bobby, she came from a struggling single parent working class family and quit school before completing her studies. Also, like Bobby, she found an expression for her intellect in competitive chess, won the U.S. title at her first attempt, achieved celebrity status, but then abandoned the game in her late twenties and shunned further publicity.

Born in Philadelphia, 25 April 1938, Lisa's roots lay in English and Pennsylvania Dutch stock. But she never knew her father, as he left home when she was only a year and a half old. And she didn't see too much of her mother either, as she worked two jobs, day and night, to provide for the family. In fact, for a significant part of their childhood, Lisa and her sister Evelyn had to live with their grandmother and various foster families, or else board at schools they attended.

'When I beat a man, I don't know what to say to him. It must be very humiliating. I feel sorry for him. But I never feel this way during a game.'

Such constant movement from household to household and school to school must have been pretty tough, both emotionally and educationally, but Lisa was well liked by her friends and teachers, and achieved good grades. It was only later, after some unhappy personal experiences, that she became rather resentful, confrontational and rebellious. She decided to leave High School early and seek gainful employment. 'I had 13 jobs in less than two years,' she admitted, 'I was always getting a crush on the boss.'

By now in her late teens and in a relationship with a well-educated man, she felt that her lack of a college education was placing her at a disadvantage and therefore decided to resume her studies by enrolling as a special student at Temple University. She later said: 'I did well in logic in college, and chess is like logic.'

However, just when she seemed to be getting her life back on track, Lisa found herself derailed by two major upsets. Firstly, the man went abroad and disappeared from her life. Secondly, while driving her mother's car, she knocked down an elderly lady who had stepped out in front of her.

Though cleared of any blame for the fatal accident, this traumatic experience sent Lisa spiralling into a deep crisis. She abandoned her studies for a second time and opened a bookstore, The Trident, which specialised in poetry. Although this business venture proved unsuccessful, the store happened to be close to The Artist's Hut, a bohemian coffee house where Lisa spent much of her spare time. And it was here, in the spring of 1957, that a boy taught her how to play chess.

■ ■ ■

'I had never seen anybody play chess. I just knew it was the name of a game, like whist is a game, but that was all I knew about it... It became like dope to me. I would stay up till five or six in the morning playing chess.'

Lisa was nineteen years of age at this time and within a few months she was taking on and beating all-comers in the coffee house. Recognising her natural talent for chess, an enthusiastic young player, Arnold Chertkof, took Lisa to the Franklin Mercantile Club, where he introduced her to the American master Attilio Di Camillo, who, after a little persuasion, agreed to coach her. Thus Lisa and Bobby – who always spoke highly of his first teacher Carmine Nigro – were both launched on the path to chess success by Italian-American tutors.

In Lisa's own words: 'I dropped out of Temple University – I wasn't much of a student anyway – and devoted eight to twelve hours a day to chess. I'd work with Di Cam all morning; then in the afternoons and evenings I'd play at a chess club near my home, and write down every move. The next day my teacher and I would go over the previous day's games. I spent all my money on chess books.'

However, Lisa's days at the Franklin Mercantile were short lived. She was suspended from the club after a dispute in which her volatile temper had got the better of her, even if she did deny the allegations – 'I never hit that guy with an ashtray. I didn't even throw it at him!'

Anyway, the incident did no damage whatsoever to the working relationship with her coach. On the contrary, at the end of the year, Di Camillo set off for New York to take part in the U.S. championship and en route he and Chertkof dropped by The Trident, inviting Lisa to come along too. It was to prove a defining moment. Seeing how impressed Lisa was with 14-year-old Bobby Fischer's title win, Di Camillo told her, 'If you're willing to work hard you can be the women's champion in two years.'

Three months later she won a match to decide the Philadelphia Women's championship. Then, in the summer, she competed in her first national tournament, the U.S. Open, held in Rochester, Minnesota, scoring 6 points, only half a point less than Kathryn Slater, winner of the women's title.

In the meantime Lisa had closed down The Trident and got an administrative job in a Philadelphia hospital. Though she was no longer training intensively with Di Camillo, she still spent much of her spare time studying chess – and the results were beginning to show. After a fine performance in a rating tournament at the Chess and Checkers Club in New York, March 1959, she was mentioned for the first time in *Chess Review*. Here, editor Al Horowitz warned: 'Her impressive record against players of master and expert strength should alert the reigning American chess queens to a rapidly developing threat from an unexpected quarter.'

'People will be attracted to the game by a young, pretty girl. That's why chess should support me. I'm bringing it publicity and, ultimately, money.'

Lisa followed up by winning both the U.S. Amateur and Marshall Chess Club women's titles.

Then, at the end of the year, she fulfilled Di Camillo's prophecy right on schedule by capturing the U.S. women's championship. This was an outstanding achievement for someone who had learned the moves less than three years previously. After racing away with six and a half points from her first seven games, Lisa then clinched the title with a last round draw against Gisela Gresser, twenty years her senior and several times American woman champion. In this way she overturned the old guard in much the same fashion as Bobby Fischer when he won the U.S. championship ahead of the battle-hardened veteran Sammy Reshevsky.

So, after two years of concentrated chess study and practice, Lisa was now being seen as an overnight sensation! Yet she was not entirely satisfied. Different rounds of the championship took place in different clubs – the Marshall and Manhattan, and the Log Cabin in New Jersey. Lisa later recalled: 'My first championship was a big let down. We had played in a basement in New Jersey because the man who had put up $1,000 for it, wanted it there. Then they drove us back to New York. And there I was – champion – all alone in my hotel room.'

Nevertheless Lisa's performance entitled her to a big bonus – an invitation to play in the Candidates' tournament which would determine the next challenger for Russian world champion Elizaveta Bykova.

■ ■ ■

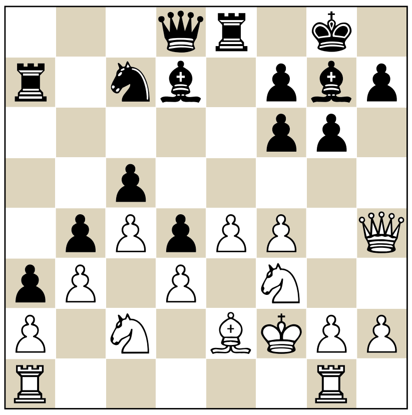
Nine days after becoming U.S. champion, Lisa married Walter Rich, an advertising man, commercial artist and designer, whom she had known since her earliest coffee house days.

However, this did not inhibit a certain newspaper journalist, by name of Neil Hickey, from showering Lisa with compliments when he wrote a feature article on her. His opening words were: 'The darkly beautiful girl you see in the picture is neither an aspiring dramatic actress, a cheesecake Hollywood starlet, nor a $100-an-hour high fashion photographer's model... Lisa Lane confounds all customary notions of bookish, brainy females. She has all the equipment, all the lissom beauty of a cover girl.'

Neil could hardly have imagined that he was sowing the seeds of a future front-page story in which he himself would be intimately involved...

During her first year of marriage, the newly crowned champion did not play much chess. She competed in a couple of tournaments at Boston and Washington, but her best performance came at the giant U.S. Open held in St Louis. Here she took the women's title with 7 points from 12 games, the highest score ever made by a woman in the Open up to that time.

Let's see an early example of her play from that event.



W.Wright-Lisa Lane
St. Louis U.S. Open 1960

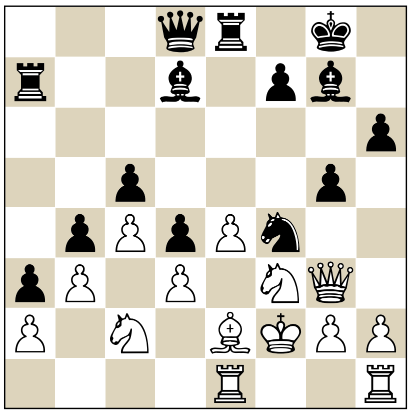
Lisa finds an original way to proceed with the attack. **20...♘e6 21.♖ae1 g5!** To harass the white queen and secure the f4 square for the black knight. **22.fxg5 fxg5 23.♕g3** On 23.♕h5 there was the continuation 23...♖f8 24.g3 f5 25.exf5 ♖xf5 26.♔g2

♗e8 27.♕h3 ♖af7 28.♖gf1 ♗d7 29.♕h5 ♘f8.

23...h6 24.♖h1

If 24.h4 then 24...f6, maintaining the support point on g5.

24...♘f4



25.h4? Better was 25.h3, but then Lisa had the dangerous break 25...f5.

25...♘h5 26.♕h2 g4

The finish is merciless.

27.♔f1 gxf3 28.♗xf3 ♗e5 29.♕g1 ♘g3+ 30.♔f2 ♘xh1+ 31.♕xh1 ♖a6 32.g4 ♖g6 33.g5 hxg5 34.♗h5 ♖g7 35.♖f1 gxh4 36.♔e1 ♗g3+ 37.♔d2 ♕g5+

White resigned.

Lisa's extensive pawn play on both sides of the board, coupled with her restraining, blockading strategy, makes a powerful impression. No wonder she named her two cats Philidor and Nimzowitsch!

As always, Lisa's fiercely competitive reputation followed her around. After resigning one game in the U.S. Open, she ran out of the tournament hall in anger. 'I hated him', she said of the man who beat her. 'I wanted to crack the board over his head. Later, when I heard he sat at the table for two hours showing everyone how he had beaten me, I wanted to kill him.' All of which, by comparison, makes the young Bobby Fischer's reaction to a defeat look very tame – he would just go to a quiet corner and cry.

In an issue of *Look* magazine, which had a six million print run, there was a pictorial feature on Lisa and her husband Walter. She was quoted as saying 'I'd like children someday but next year there's Yugoslavia, and then maybe a match for the world title.'

Yet, only a few weeks later, her marriage was on the rocks. In February 1961, after obtaining a $1,000 grant from the People-to-People Sports Foundation, Lisa left Philadelphia and went on her own to New York, the centre of American chess life, so she could focus on her preparation for the Candidates' tournament.

■ ■ ■

She rented a small apartment in Greenwich Village and lived a Spartan existence with only her phone and chess set, two Siamese cats and dozens of chess books, to keep her company. She didn't even have a radio or television, which she considered to be a distraction. Like Bobby, she learned Russian to read Soviet chess literature and worked from dusk to dawn. 'I have many years of studying to catch up on because I learned the game so late', she said. 'If talent alone won championships, I'd be the world champion now.'

'I have many years of studying to catch up on because I started the game so late. If talent alone won championships, I'd be the world champion now.'

Lisa hired a chess tutor and played at the Marshall Chess Club and Rossolimo's Chess Studio. She also worked freelance for *Chess Life* magazine and subsequently maintained a long-term friendship with the editor, Frank Brady – despite the fact that she had got mad at him on their first meeting, when, as controller of a New York tournament, he had defaulted her for arriving late.

To raise her profile, Lisa gave interviews to such weighty periodicals as *Newsweek* and *New York Times Magazine*. She also featured in syndicated newspaper columns throughout the USA and made personal appearances on TV and radio. In turn, this heightened publicity brought her invitations to give simultaneous exhibitions, which provided her with a valuable source of income.

Three years earlier, Bobby Fischer had been on the television show *I've got a secret* – and the panel failed to identify him as the U.S. champion. In turn, Lisa now appeared on *What's my line?*, but again nobody came close to guessing that this beautiful woman was a chess professional.

Indeed, Lisa was well aware of her potential to change the stereotyped negative image of chess players as ugly intellectuals. 'For this reason alone I'm the most important American chess player', she said in the *New York Times Magazine*. 'People will be attracted to the game by a young, pretty girl. That's why chess should support me. I'm bringing it publicity and, ultimately, money.'

'I get a lot of love letters from other chess players. I read them, I laugh, and then I file them. Letters from grandmasters go on top', she added, whilst pointing out that the only thing that angered her was when men refused to take her seriously.

Remember, it was at this time that Bobby Fischer insulted every woman on the planet: 'Lisa will never beat any top men regularly – no woman can. They can't concentrate, they don't have stamina and they aren't creative. They're all fish. Lisa, you might say, is the best of the American fish.'

Mind you, the teenage Bobby didn't have it all his own way. When he snapped at Lisa: 'Men and women shouldn't play together', she snapped back: 'Then adults and children shouldn't play together!'

Though, of course, Lisa acknowledged Fischer's superiority as a chess player, her ultimate ambition was indeed to be able to beat the best men chess players.

Incidentally, in an interview with Mary Campbell, she made a distinction between men generally and men as opponents:

On the one hand... 'Playing chess is a good way to meet men. Look at the ratio – at the last U.S. Open there were 180 men and 12 women.'

On the other... 'If I lose I feel really crushed, no matter who I'm playing. I'm a poor loser. When I beat a man, I don't know what to say to him. It must be very humiliating. I feel sorry for him. But I never feel this way during a game.'

And by way of encouragement to the so-called 'weaker sex': 'Chess should be interesting to women because it's one sport in which women can compete with men without a handicap such as a physical sport gives you. It's mental, so you compete on the same level.'

■ ■ ■

As a warm up for the Candidates' tournament, Lisa had been expecting to take part in the immediately preceding Women's Olympiad in Emmen, Holland, but this was cancelled at the last minute when the East German team was not allowed a visa. By way of consolation she tried to organise a match with Milunka Lazarevic, Yugoslavia's glamorous top woman player, but funds were not forthcoming. Therefore she played instead in the Western Open in Milwaukee, financing her trip by exhibition play and winning the women's title.

Then, in October, she set off for Vrnjacka Banja, encouraged by a prediction Bobby had made after analysing her games: 'I think that Lisa can go to Yugoslavia and win the Candidates' tournament and then go on to Moscow and win the women's world championship.' Lisa herself was no less confident: 'I wouldn't be travelling that far if I didn't think I could win.'

When she got off the plane at Belgrade airport, everyone thought she was a Hollywood movie star. On being told she had been called 'the most beautiful woman that ever played chess', she asked, 'Did Cleopatra play chess?' In this way, with her Elizabeth Taylor looks, she was losing no time in taking up her rightful place in the Yugoslav press.

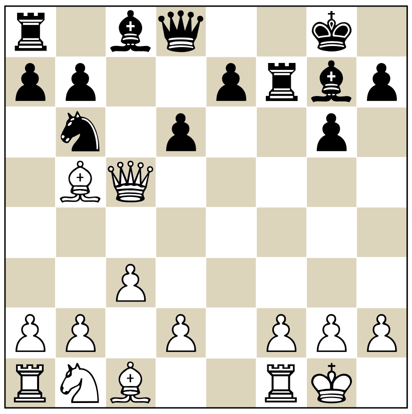
There followed lots of invitations for her to visit various chess clubs in Yugoslavia. On one envelope a fan had simply stuck a newspaper photo of Lisa, adding the words 'Vrnjacka Banja' – and his letter arrived before those that were properly addressed and posted several days earlier!

With all the pre-tournament publicity Lisa was getting, the Soviets feared they had another Bobby Fischer on their hands and so took her very seriously. The more so that Fischer had just won a mighty tournament in Bled that year, crushing the USSR grandmasters 3½-½. As it turned out, in Vrnjacka Banja roles were reversed and it was Lisa who was on the receiving end and by the even bigger margin of ½-4½. Nevertheless, experts said that Lisa had produced most of the ideas in her games with the Russians and she just needed more experience of international tournament play.

By way of example, let's look at the gutsy way Lisa took the fight to Kira Zvorikina, winner of the previous Candidates' tournament.

SI 31.8 – B31
Kira Zvorikina
Lisa Lane
Vrnjacka Banja Women's
Candidates' 1961

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 g6 4.0-0 ♗g7 5.c3 ♘f6 6.♕e2 0-0 7.e5 ♘d5 8.♕c4 ♘b6 9.♕xc5 ♘xe5 10.♘xe5 d6 11.♘xf7 ♖xf7

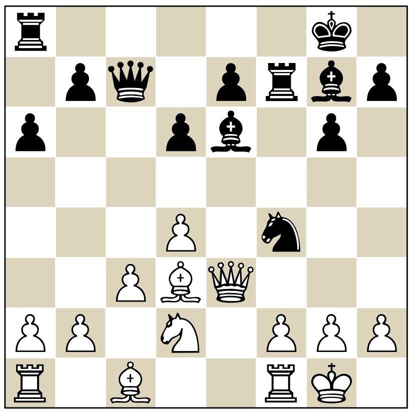


For the sacrificed pawn Black has a lead in development and the initiative.

12.♕e3 ♕c7

12...e5 is an alternative, here or on the next move.

13.d4 ♗f5 14.♘d2 a6 15.♗d3 ♘d5 16.♕f3 ♗e6 17.♕e4 ♘f4 18.♕e3



18...♖af8

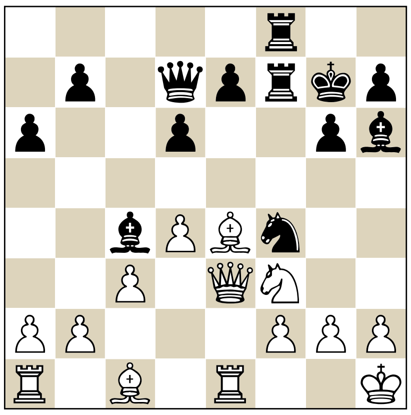
Black could win the pawn back here by 18...♗h6 19.♔h1 ♘xd3 20.♕xd3 ♗xd2 21.♕xd2 ♗xa2!, as 22.♖xa2 ♕c4 would fork the rooks. But this continuation is not in the spirit of the attack.

19.♗e4 ♗h6 Very sharp play, as the bishop is unprotected.

20.♔h1 ♔g7

Threatening ...♘h3+ or ...♘xg2.

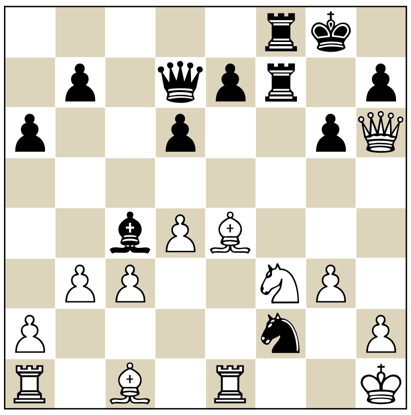
21.♘f3 ♗c4 22.♖e1 ♕d7



23.g3 ♔g8 24.b3

24.gxf4 ♗xf4 loses for White, but also insufficient is 24.♘d2 ♘g2 25.♕xh6 ♘xe1 26.♘xc4 ♕e6 27.♘d2 ♖xf2 28.♔g1 d5 29.♗h1 ♘c2 30.♘f3 ♖8xf3 winning.

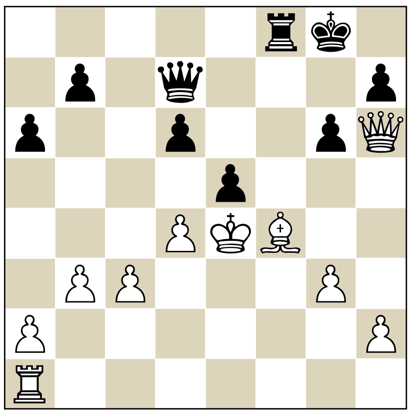
24...♘h3 25.♕xh6 ♘xf2+



26.♔g2?

Placing the king here leaves the king vulnerable to the action of Black's bishop on the h1-a8 diagonal. Correct is 26.♔g1.

26...♘xe4 27.♖xe4 ♖xf3 28.♗f4 ♗d5 29.♔xf3 ♗xe4+ 30.♔xe4 e5!



31.♗g5?

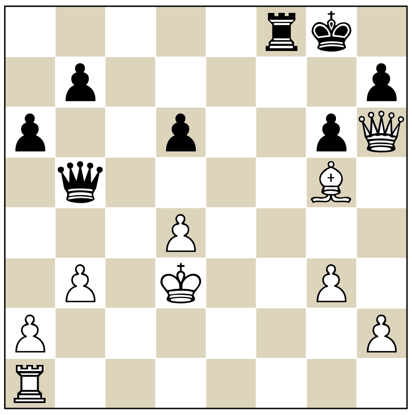
Lisa has played in Tal style and created an unusual position in which her opponent's king is vulnerable to attack – since, funnily enough, the white queen is out of play on h6!

But 31.♖f1! saves White. Then Black only has 31...♕f5+ 32.♔e3 exf4+ 33.♖xf4 ♖e8+ 34.♔f3 ♕c2, recovering the pawn with a slightly better position.

31...♕c6+?

Lisa could have won with the direct 31...♕f5+ 32.♔e3 ♕c2!, e.g. 33.♖e1 ♖f2 threatening 34...♕d2+. White would instead have to give up her queen by 33.♕xf8+ but this would not save the game in the long run.

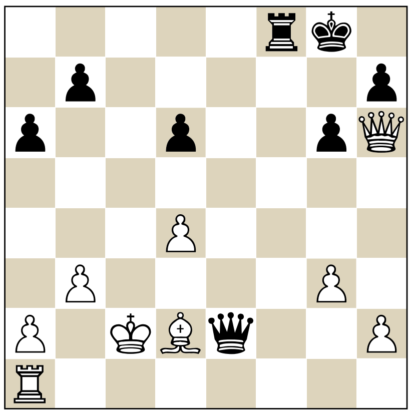
32.♔d3 exd4 33.cxd4 ♕b5+



34.♔c2?

34.♔c3 ♕a5+ 35.♔d3 ♕f5+ 36.♔d2 ♕f2+ 37.♔d3 ♕f5+ is a draw by repetition.

34...♕e2+ 35.♗d2



35...♖c8+?

This loses. Instead 35...♕e4+! 36.♔c3 ♖f3+ 37.♔b2 ♕xd4+ 38.♔b1 ♖f1+ 39.♗c1 ♖f2 40.♕e3 ♖b2+ 41.♗xb2 ♕xe3 wins.

36.♔b2 ♕d3 37.♖c1 ♕xd4+ 38.♗c3 ♕f2+ 39.♖c2 ♕f7 40.h4 b5 41.♕f4

Black resigned.

A bitter disappointment for Lisa, who would not shake the hand of Zvorikina – or indeed anyone who beat her in Vrnjacka Banja!

Halfway through the tournament, international master Dragoljub Ciric volunteered to serve as her second, in order to put her on an equal footing with the Soviet players, all of whom had their trainers in attendance. However, Ciric did not speak English and Lisa did not speak Serbo-Croat, which made for problems in communication. But he did learn two important lessons: 'Don't begin to play or analyse with Lisa without enough food in hand for at least two meals; and when analysing an adjourned game of hers, take care not to point out her opponent's best possible moves as these make her furious.'

At close of play, Lisa finished in the lower half of the table with 4 wins, 4 draws and 8 losses.

Nevertheless she proved to be very popular in Yugoslavia and when visiting Sarajevo after the tournament, over five hundred people came to hear her being interviewed. And there was plenty of fighting talk. 'Everyone has a million excuses for not fulfilling her ambitions,' she said, 'but I can tell you I was not well prepared for the tournament and I didn't have enough luck. I expected more from the USSR players; they have not shown very much in the games with me. If I practice enough till the next Candidates' tournament I will be first.'

Whilst in Yugoslavia, Lisa received invitations to play in two more tournaments, at Hastings and Beverwijk, and so she extended her stay in Europe.

■ ■ ■

On her arrival in Hastings, after Christmas, Lisa told the Congress officials that she 'just couldn't get up at 9 o'clock in the morning', so arrangements were made to move all her 'Premier Reserves B' games to the afternoon session, provided her opponents agreed. However, this created a problem when there were adjournments, as happened in round three when she kept the Controller on duty until midnight, before finally resigning.

As a consequence, after drawing with England woman international, Eileen Tranmer, in the first round and losing her next three games, one by forfeit, Lisa was given a more suitable playing schedule. The Controller had come to an agreement with her remaining opponents that they play their games with Lisa from 2-6 p.m. and 8-10 p.m. However, his efforts were all in vain as Lisa did not turn up for the next two days – and then announced her withdrawal from the tournament due to love sickness!

Bruce Hayden, a witty chess writer and former *Sunday Times* columnist, was watching events as they unfolded. He knew a good story when he saw one and tipped off several national daily newspapers. And sure enough, that evening, a horde of reporters from London descended on the tournament to attend a hastily arranged press conference. Yet again, Lisa had attracted publicity like a magnet and the following morning her story was splashed all over the front pages – with headlines such as 'Lovesick Lisa quits', 'Love Checkmates Chess Girl', 'My one-sided affair', 'Women just can't forget the love game'...

At her press conference Lisa admitted that she had finally been outplayed by Cupid: 'I quit because I'm in love. It's no use. I'm a woman. I can't stay away from him any more. I really feel very bad about leaving Hastings like this. It isn't a very sporting thing to do. But once I started day-dreaming, I just couldn't concentrate. I thought it would be very foolish of me to keep playing. My chess wouldn't be up to standard any more. My mind's on other things.'

'Perhaps I shouldn't even call him my boy friend. It's rather taking things for granted. I just miss him and New York.'

'This may well be the end of chess for me. I have been playing too much. I'm like a beginner again. I may quit chess altogether. Trouble is, I don't know how to do anything else.'

Later that night Lisa admitted that the man she was in love with was Neil Hickey, the journalist who had interviewed her two years before.

Reaction from New York was not long coming. 'An embarrassed Mr. Hickey spent the day dodging his fellow newspapermen. He took the phone off the hook at his Greenwich Village apartment, and took the afternoon off from work. But he told friends: 'I never guessed Lisa would do this – throwing away her world chess chances for me. I thought chess was the most important thing in her life."

The next day Lisa lunched with the mayor of Hastings, Cecil Barfoot, who invited her to the Town Hall to say farewell. 'We cannot let you leave without giving you some official hospitality', the mayor said. Lisa then signed the distinguished visitors book.

'I don't care how well I play if I lose... I have to win.'

On Thursday, Lisa was talking to the press again, this time from London, where she was staying at a West End hotel in readiness for her flight back home. She had already phoned Neil in New York and told him she was sorry his name had been revealed in the media frenzy.

'I'm going home on Friday. Neil will meet me at the airport. He has told me he is not annoyed with me, although he was a bit surprised to hear I had resigned from the tournament. I will not know how he feels until I see him. Since talking to Neil my hopes have not been raised. It still feels a one-sided affair.'

The intensity of paparazzi pressure had become a bit too much even for someone as adept as Lisa in handling the media. 'I would rather not answer any more questions', she said. 'There has been an awful lot of publicity I really did not want.'

It was the 'Queen of Fleet Street', gossip columnist Marjorie Proops, who summed up the whole situation.

First, from a female perspective:

'Lovelorn chess champion Lisa Lane flies home to New York from Britain tomorrow – proof, once again, that women will never get anywhere until they learn to stop falling in love. Ambition, intellect and ability crumble when the powerful forces of passion dominate a woman's mind. Only those rare women with tough, manlike minds refuse to allow sentiment to interfere with business. And they're usually ones who get to the top. But a romantic girl never takes time off from her dreams.'

Then from the male point of view:

'Can you imagine a MAN packing up a game for love? Certainly not! A man divides his life up into neat pigeon-hole compartments. He can shut-up the pigeon-hole marked "love", switch off his day-dreams between 9 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. and switch them on again – when he gets home.'

Daily Mail
FOR QUEEN AND COMMONWEALTH News Chronicle WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3, 1962

The sad lesson of Lisa, the lovesick chess queen (Next move—to meet her 'knight' in New York City)

WOMEN CAN'T FORGET THE LOVE GAME

Says MARJORIE PROOPS

LOVELORN chess champion Lisa Lane flies home to New York from Britain tomorrow—proof, once again, that women will never get anywhere until they learn to stop falling in love.

Lisa, 24-year-old American champion, retired from the Hastings International Chess Congress because she was too much in love. Ambition, intellect and ability crumble when the powerful forces of passion dominate a woman's mind.

INSTEAD OF concentrating on chess moves, Lisa's thoughts were 3,500 miles away.

INSTEAD OF pondering on the game that has provided her with a very good living, Lisa was daydreaming about Mr. Neil Hickey, 36, of Sixth Avenue, New York.

LISA LANE . . . she was daydreaming.

'Slightly'

She isn't even sure that **HE** loves **HER**.

Journalist Neil says he knows Lisa "only slightly."

But that kind of remark, as every girl knows, doesn't matter a bit.

Girls just go on dreaming—forgetting their ambitions, neglecting their jobs.

Can you imagine a **MAN** packing up a game for love ?

Certainly not! A man divides his life up into neat pigeon-hole compartments.

Rare

He can shut-up the pigeon-hole marked "love," switch off his day-dreams between 9 a.m. and 5.30 p.m., and switch them on again when he gets home.

Only those rare women with tough, man-like minds refuse to allow sentiment to interfere with business.

dreams. Which, I reckon, is why so few women reach high places in sport, business or politics.

When they're in love—they just can't keep their minds on the game.

I only hope that when Lisa's plane touches down tomorrow in New York Neil is there (with roses) to meet her.

● **IN LONDON** last night Lisa phoned Hickey in New York and told him she was sorry his name had been revealed when she quit the Hastings tournament.

Lisa disclosed that she married American chess player Walter Rich in 1959. They were divorced last August.

DAILY EXPRESS
WEDNESDAY JANUARY 3 1962 3 a.m. forecast: Cold; fog patches

I CAN'T GO ON SAYS U.S. CHAMPION

Love Chess AND Miss Lisa

By DONALD CAMERON

A BEAUTIFUL girl chess champion forgot all about the cold, calm logic of the game last night—and sighed for her unrequited love.

Lisa Lane, aged 24, six-times winner of the American women's championship, had just withdrawn from the Hastings International Chess Congress.

Checkmated by her daydreams of a man.

"I just couldn't concentrate on my game for thinking about him," she said. "It's no use. I'm a woman. I can't stay away from him any more."

TO BE NEAR

This week-end she returns to New York to be near the man she loves.

"I am not going back to marry him," she said. "Perhaps I shall never marry. You see, I'm afraid my feelings for him are not reciprocated."

Chess champion Lisa. Next move—home

Daily Mirror
3d. Wednesday, January 3, 1962 No. 18,05

My one-sided affair, by Lisa

DAILY SKETCH
THURSDAY, JANUARY 4, 1962 3d

I MUST FIND CURE FOR THIS LOVE SICKNESS SAYS CHESS GIRL

By Daily Mail Reporter

CHESS champion Lisa Lane talked last night of her "one-sided love affair" with New York journalist Neil Hickey.

NOT-AT-HOME NEIL. *"I never guessed . . ."*

Miss Lane, 24-year-old American women's champion, withdrew from the Hastings chess tournament on Tuesday because she could not stop thinking about her boy friend.

"I cannot concentrate," she said. "It's love, I'm afraid."

Last night she spoke to 29-year-old Mr. Hickey, a magazine writer, by Transatlantic telephone.

Then she said at a West End hotel:

"I'm going home on Friday. Neil will meet me at the airport. He has told me he is not annoyed with me, although he was a bit surprised to hear I had resigned from the tournament.

I will not know how he feels until I see him. I only know how I feel myself. It's a sort of sickness and I hope to get over it one way or another, but I cannot imagine how.

Hopes

"To talk of marriage suggests I have hopes, and, as a woman, I cannot admit that.

Since talking to Neil my hopes have not been raised. It still feels a one-sided affair. I have been phoning him regularly, but that has not been enough.

I have given up being a chess champion. I must find new interests"

JEFFREY BLYTH cables from New York: An embarrassed Mr. Hickey spent today dodging his fellow newspapermen.

He took the phone off the hook at his Greenwich Village apartment, and took the afternoon off from work. But he told friends: "I never guessed Lisa would do this — throwing away her world chess chances for me. I thought chess was the most important thing in her life."

LISA LANE
She's a killer!

LOVE CHECKMATES CHESS GIRL

CHESS queen Lisa Lane, pictured above, resigned last night from an international chess congress and said: "I quit because I'm in love."

Lisa, 24-year-old American women's champion, added at Hastings, Sussex, where the congress is being held:

"I just can't concentrate. I daydream all the time. Because I'm thinking of him."

Who is the man she loves? Said Lisa: "I would rather not say. It would be too embarrassing. I am not engaged. Just in love."

Lisa, from New York, will be back there on Friday.

Is the man in New York? "Yes," said Miss Lane. "But I'm going back because I'm homesick.

"I have been playing too much. I'm like a beginner again. I may quit chess altogether. Trouble is, I don't know how to do anything else."

At the Hastings congress Lisa completed only one of her five scheduled games. The completed game, against British woman champion Eileen Tranmer, was drawn.

But we leave the final word to Bobby Fischer, who was asked in a television interview what he thought of Lisa quitting the chess tournament because she was in love. After due consideration, Bobby replied: 'That's not a good reason!'

■ ■ ■

So Lisa returned to New York and was met by Neil at the airport. Though he had told the press he 'knew Lisa only slightly', last summer the two of them had spent weekends together with friends at a cottage near the Hudson River. 'When my divorce became final in August, I saw a lot more of Neil', said Lisa. They had never previously talked of marriage – but apparently that was now about to change.

Within a few days Lisa appeared at the Abraham & Straus department store in Brooklyn to give a 'post-retirement' simultaneous exhibition, as she had promised. But shortly afterwards she announced that she was not giving up chess after all, but would be defending her U.S. title later that year.

The sad news was that Di Camillo passed away in February at the age of 44. Though he had suffered from arthritis and other chronic ailments, his death was caused by pneumonia. Lisa never failed to pay tribute to the coaching she received from him.

The Hastings love story had served to keep Lisa very much in the news and she continued to make public appearances and play exhibition games. In March, for example, she gave five consecutive simultaneous displays in Pittsburgh. Among her opponents was reporter Vince Johnson, who recounted his experience as follows:

'I played a game of chess yesterday with Lisa Lane and, now, I'm thinking of taking up Mahjong. It was humiliating, being manhandled by a woman. Lisa, you may remember, is the gal who walked out on the International Chess Tournament in Hastings, England, early this year because she was in love and could not concentrate.

However, she didn't have any trouble concentrating when I was around. I guess I'm the type that brings out the intellect in a woman. She is not a good-looking woman who happens to play chess; she is a chess-player who happens to be a good-looking woman. She is a pixie with a high IQ, a Brigitte Bardot with brains.

As a matter of fact, it is downright distracting to play with her. If you think I am making an excuse for losing, you are right, I resigned after 10 moves.'

In the summer, Lisa was appointed chess pro at Grossinger's, where Bobby famously trained before his match with Spassky, ten years later.

■ ■ ■

The 1962 U.S. women's championship took place at the Manhattan Chess Club and was won by Mrs. Gresser with 8½/10. Lisa came second with 7½, losing both to the winner and Mary Bain – in each case as a result of over-ambitious play.

These results came to have significance with regard to the Women's Olympiad, to be held in Yugoslavia, the following year. Lisa hit the newspapers again with the headline, 'Blacklisting in chess denounced as 'catty'.'

'I was flabbergasted when I picked up a chess magazine and saw the announcement of the U.S. team – Mrs. Gisela Kahn Gresser and Mrs. Mary Bain', said Lisa, 'I really flipped my lid, I knew Mrs. Gresser would be picked because she is the national champion, but the selection of Mrs. Bain stunned me. She is ranked about fifth in the country. I am second. I not only was runner-up in our national championship but hold the No.2 national ranking, With Mrs. Gresser I qualified for the Women's Candidates' tournament in 1964.'

Lisa felt she was being blacklisted for a very catty reason: 'It's because I'm young and fairly pretty. I think they just don't like me and are sore because I had been getting so much publicity. Everywhere I go, people want to take my picture and get interviews.'

On making further enquiries, Lisa was told that the matter of expenses had been taken into account. The two selected ladies would be on holiday in Europe just before the Olympiad and thereby save the USCF travel costs across the Atlantic. Mrs. Gresser had also put forward the argument that Mrs. Bain's inclusion in the team was justified because she had defeated Lisa in their individual game in the U.S. championship.

After failing to get satisfaction from U.S. officials about the unfair way she had been treated, Lisa lodged a complaint with the FIDE President, Folke Rogard, 'Since when do you have to be a millionairess to represent your country at a sport?' she asked.

Lisa's words were very pointed. Gisela Gresser was the daughter of Julius Kahn, the man who invented reinforced concrete. However the FIDE President had no powers to intervene in team selection and an embittered Lisa turned away from playing tournament chess and decided to open a chess café instead.

■ ■ ■

The Queen's Pawn chess emporium, situated below street level on Sheridan Square, Greenwich Village, was opened in April 1963. The premises, with a Seventh Avenue façade, had previously been used as a paperback bookshop but Lisa had taken down all the wooden shelving and used it to decoratively panel the bare brick walls. It was almost as if her new chess café was rising Phoenix-like from the ashes of the Trident.

There were sixteen chess boards, a counter where coffee and pastries were served, a comfortable seating area for those waiting for an opponent, and a shop selling all kinds of chess sets. On the walls hung arty chess pictures – and some of Lisa's personal press cuttings and trophies were also on display. 'Emporium' was the right word to describe the establishment as it was a friendly drop in chess café rather than a formal club like the Marshall or Manhattan. The price of a board was 30 cents per player per hour and chess could be played from two in the afternoon till two at night – or later. Lisa herself was usually on hand to match players according to their strength.

Lisa ran the place with a feminine touch but also imposed a quite disciplined code of conduct. Hustlers were directed to the Chess and Checker Club in Times Square and kibitzing was discouraged. 'It's bad for the players' egos. Both players have to give permission before a kibitzer can start hanging around. There was a chess homicide in the Village a few years ago. The argument wasn't between players but between a player and a kibitzer.'

During the first six months of 1964, Frank Brady brought out three issues of his *Chessworld* magazine, each of which was a work of art. Among the many splendid articles was a lavishly illustrated feature on chess clubs, cafés and bars in Greenwich Village, which of course included the Queen's Pawn.

When U.S. Senior Master Eliot Hearst visited the Queen's Pawn, Lisa told him a funny story: 'Outside the club a sign reads "Chess, Schach, Echecs, Scacchi, Ajedrez, Sah, Szachy" *["chess" in seven languages]*. One guy came in and was mad that checker sets and opponents were not available; he pointed to the sign and said "How can you advertise all those other games out there and not play checkers?" '

Incidentally, Lisa also told Eliot that she was friendly with Bobby – and he occasionally visited her, 'always with someone, never alone'. She had apparently forgiven him for his harsh words about her and women in general.

Talking to the *New Yorker* in 1964, shortly before she was about to leave for the Candidates' tournament in Russia, Lisa said, 'This time, I'm preparing by not preparing, Lately, I've been playing five-minute and seven-minute chess with local male experts. In Yugoslavia, I found that games aren't won by brilliance – they're lost by blunders.'

She was in the process of packing and reminded herself: 'I've got to take along extras, my Newports and cosmetics. Also presents.' Just for the record, Lisa would get through about thirty cigarettes in a single game!

'When absorbed in her game she seems beautifully serious, or seriously beautiful, a side of feminine loveliness that Hollywood has rather neglected.'

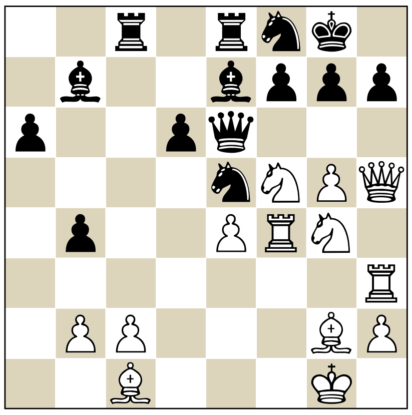
■ ■ ■

So Lisa took off to the Black Sea resort of Sukhumi for her second attempt at the world championship. From the Russian photos taken of her during the tournament, whether at the board, on the beach, or when giving autographs, she looked every bit a celebrity – even more so that she now had shoulder length hair!

In the end, her final result proved to be slightly better than at Vrnjacka Banja. She had started well with 6/10, only to lose five consecutive games to the Russian players. Yet, despite this debacle, she then proceeded to beat the sixth Russian, former USSR champion, Valentina Borisenko.

Lisa once said, 'If I go anywhere and have to wait in line, I can't stand it', yet she had the patience to manoeuvre until the 133rd move to win a rook and bishop versus rook ending against Hungarian champion Eva Karakas.

Then again, she played the following crushing attack against a player who had scored 12/12 on second board for Yugoslavia in the previous year's Women's Olympiad.



Lisa Lane – Verica Nedeljkovic
Sukhumi Women's Candidates' 1964

This bears a close resemblance to one of Bobby Fischer's King's Indian Attacks in full swing, and Lisa shows the same incisiveness in finishing off her opponent.

27.♘xg7! ♔xg7 28.♘f6 ♘g4

Alternatives are no better: 28...♗xf6 29.gxf6+ ♔g8 30.♕h6 wins at once, or 28...♕xh3 29.♗xh3 ♗xf6 30.gxf6+ ♔h8 31.♗f5 ♖xc2 32.♕h6 mates after Black's spite checks run out.

29.♖xg4 ♗xf6 30.gxf6+ ♔h8 31.♕g5 ♘g6 32.♕h6
Black resigned.

Lisa had not played a single serious tournament game for nearly two and a half years before the Candidates', so perhaps her final tally in Sukhumi of 6 wins, 2 draws and 9 losses, against a selection of the world's best women players, was not bad at all.

U.S. CHESS FEDERATION

'If I don't win the Candidates this time, I never will. The tourney won't be held again for another four years, and by that time I'll be raising a family.'

■ ■ ■

After coming back from Sukhumi, Lisa continued to run the Queen's Pawn until spring of the following year, when it closed down. Incidentally, also present at the Queen's Pawn was resident chess professional, Sonia Graf, who before the Second World War had ranked second to Vera Menchik in women's world chess. In 1964, Sonia had moved from California to New York, where she proceeded to win the U.S. women's championship, ahead of Mrs. Gresser.

Curiously, there were some similarities between Lisa and Sonia in that both honed their chess skills in coffee houses and stood up for themselves in a male dominated world. But Sonia died in early 1965, and a few weeks later, again in Lisa's absence, Mrs. Gresser took the U.S. title for the sixth time.

However, Lisa did compete in the 1966 U.S. women's championship and finished undefeated equal first with Mrs. Gresser, each scoring 8½/10 – two and a half points ahead of third placed Eva Aronson from Chicago.

This result qualified her for the next Candidates' tournament and also for a place in the U.S. team at the forthcoming Women's Olympiad in Oberhausen, Germany. Here the Americans could only finish 10th out of 14 teams but did have one moment of fame. The Romanian ladies were playing above all expectations and looked like pulling off a shock victory, ahead of the mighty USSR. However, later on in the tournament, both Mrs. Gresser and Lisa won their games against Romania, who as a result finished only with the silver medal. Soviet grandmaster Alexander Kotov commented wryly: 'Only the United States would have helped Russia!', whereas an angry Eastern European player had a different perspective when she challenged the Americans: 'Why did you beat the Romanians? It would have been a change to keep the Russians from having their way again. They ought to build you a monument!'

Lisa's last game in the Olympiad, playing White against Antonina Georgieva of Bulgaria, ended after only 5 moves.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♗g5? ♘xe4 0-1

What can explain such a blunder? Was this game played in the morning before Lisa was properly awake?

It is quite possible that her final score of two wins, two draws and six defeats may have convinced Lisa that the time had come to retire from chess. She did not take up her place in the Candidates' tournament the following year in Subotica, Yugoslavia, and no new games of hers were ever published.

Her last recorded chess appearance came at the very end of 1967, when she attended a New Year party at the home of Jack and Ethel Collins, who had done so much to help Bobby Fischer in his younger days.

She duly married Neil and in the seventies opened a metaphysical store called The Amber Waves of Grain, which she ran for nearly 40 years in Carmel, New York State.

Neil went on to become a major American journalist and authority in telecommunications. He even interviewed five U.S. presidents as well as celebrities such as Frank Sinatra and Bob Hope and was TV Guide's New York Bureau Chief for 25 years. In terms of chess, it was Neil who put together Bobby Fischer's famous article, 'The ten greatest masters in history', which appeared in *Chessworld* magazine.

As a last word, in 2005, when Jennifer Shahade was writing *Chess Bitch* – a fascinating book that takes a personal look at the lives of women chess players, past and present – she got in touch with Lisa.

'I don't think the things I did in chess forty years ago are the most important things in my life', said the former champion – adding, quite rightly: 'But I got a lot of attention from the press... I guess I was good copy!' ■

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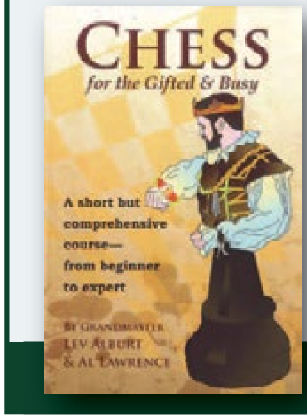
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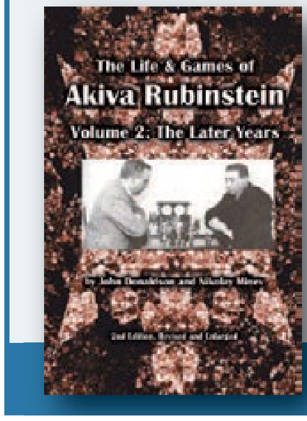
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A not so one-sided fight (1)

While playing quite a complicated game myself, I tried to follow the other game in the Crown Group's fifth round in Hoogeveen a bit too - a great fight! Here's part 1 of 2.

giri'sgrabbag By GM Anish Giri

Kramnik, V - Vachier-Lagrave, M
15th Univé, Crown Group (Hoogeveen), 2011

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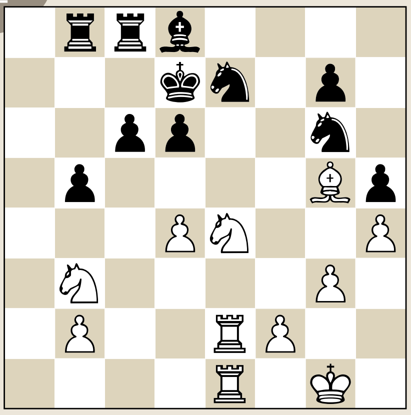
Forcing Moves

Solutions of page 61

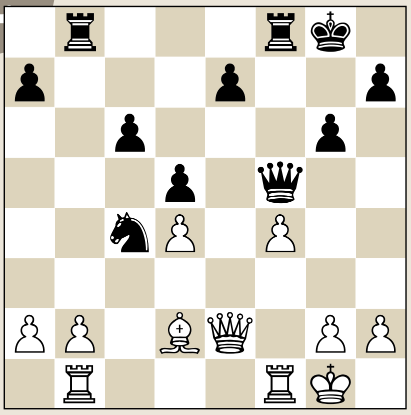
1



Lasker-Steinitz
Moscow WC match 1896 (2)

The lever **1.g4!** blows up Black's position: **1...hxg4 2.h5 ♘f8 3.♘ec5+! dxc5** 3...♔c7 4.♘a6+. **4.♘xc5+ ♔d6** and Steinitz resigned with mate looming: 5.♗f4+ ♔d5 6.♖e5+ ♔c4 (6...♔xd4 7.♖1e4 mate) 7.♖c1+ ♔b4 (7...♔xd4 8.♘b3+) 8.♗d2 mate.

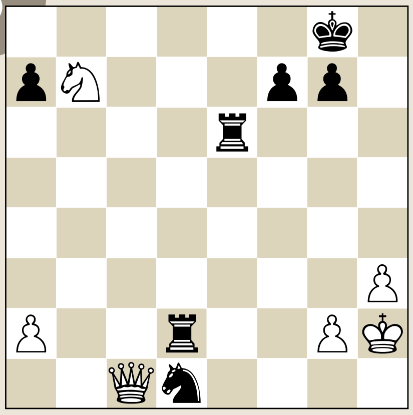
2



Baird-Lasker
New York simul 1892

1...e5!! Problemists need a name for such an impossible push, which sticks in the mind for a long time! **2.dxe5?!** Fortunately Baird wasn't a computer, because on 2.fxe5 ♕c2 3.♖xf8+ ♖xf8 4.♖d1 Black no doubt intended 4...♖f4 as in the game, but White can equalize with the ridiculous 5.e6!! ♖e4 6.♕f3! ♖xe6 7.♖f1!. Instead Black keeps a pull with 4...♕xb2 5.♕d3 ♕xa2 6.e6 ♘xd2 7.♖xd2 ♕c4 8.♕xc4 dxc4 followed by 9...♖e8. **2...♕c2 3.♖fd1 ♖xf4 4.♕e1 ♖e4 5.♕f2 ♖f8 6.♕c5 ♖e2 7.♖f1 ♖ef2! 8.e6 ♖xf1+ 9.♖xf1 ♖xf1+ 0-1** A classic testament to Lasker's dynamic style.

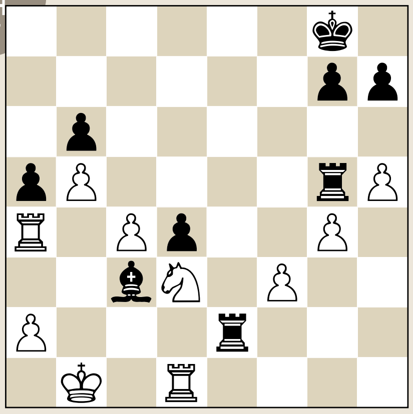
3



Marshall-Lasker
Moscow 1923

Black finished artfully after the simple fork trick **1...♘e3! 2.♕c8+** 2.♕xd2 ♘f1+. **2...♔h7 3.♕c3 ♖g6! 4.♕xe3 ♖dxg2+ 5.♔h1 ♖2g3 0-1**

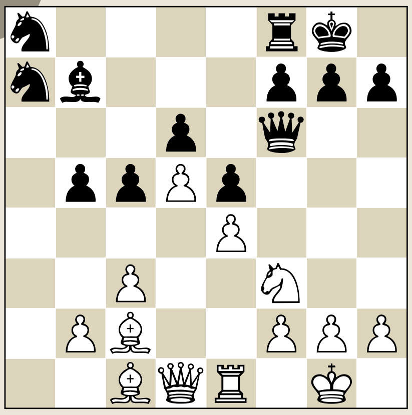
4



Lasker-Steinitz
New York WC match 1894 (1)

Lasker was a quick starter in match play, surely a key to his unmatched championship tenure. Steinitz' natural optimism was dented after over-extending in this tough Game 1 battle: **1.♖g1! ♖d2 2.f4 ♖xg4 3.♖xg4 ♖xd3 4.c5 ♖e3 5.♖c4 d3** Better, but inadequate, was 5...♖e1+ 6.♔c2 ♖e2+ 7.♔b3 ♖b2+ 8.♔a3 bxc5 9.♖xc5. **6.♖g1 d2 7.♖d1 bxc5 8.b6 ♗d4 9.b7 ♖e8 10.♔c2 ♖b8 11.♖b1 ♔f7 12.♖a4 1-0**

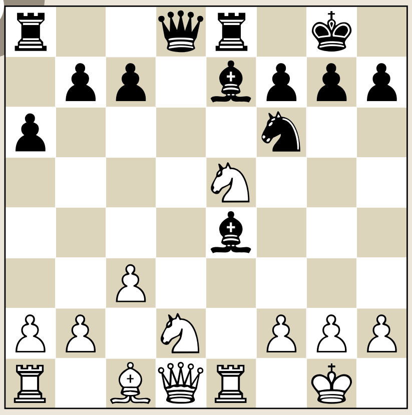
5



Lasker-Bohatirchuk
Moscow 1925

Black's minors could grace the cover of a textbook on 'Ruy Lopez Disasters'. **1.♗g5! 1-0** since 1...♕g6 2.♗e7 threatens 3.♘h4.

6



Lasker-Allies
Chicago 1937

1.♘xf7! picks a pawn: **1...♔xf7 2.♘xe4 ♕xd1** Or 2...♘xe4 3.♕h5+. **3.♘g5+ ♔g6 4.♖xd1 ♗c5** Things still look difficult even to the computer, but Lasker diffuses the counterplay: **5.♘h3! ♘g4 6.♗f4 ♖e7?** Compensation is still elusive after 6...♖e2 7.♖d2, e.g. 7...♖ae8 8.♔f1 or 7...♖xd2 8.♗xd2 ♖f8 9.♖f1. **7.♖d5!** Winning a piece. **7...♖ae8 8.♔f1 ♘xf2 9.♖xc5 ♘d3 10.♖g5+ ♔f6 11.♗g3 1-0**

Hou's on first, but Short 'carries the bat'

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The first edition in 2003, saw Nigel coming up just a bit Short on tiebreak. Ten years on, he's finally the 'man of the match'[1]. The Tradewise Gibraltar Chess Festival, celebrating Queen Elizabeth's diamond jubilee, added a new jewel to its Masters group, Hou Yifan, emerging like a butterfly, and nearly flying away with all the prizes. **Macauley Peterson** reports from the Rock.

From the playing hall window, you can look out towards the Strait of Gibraltar, which connects the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. Beyond the Rock, on a clear day, Morocco is visible – the Strait separates Europe from Africa. Geologically speaking, the African tectonic plate, moving inexorably northward at a rate of about a centimetre a year, is gradually colliding with the European one, a physical process that will close the Strait in a million and a half years or so.

For the better part of two decades, the gap between Judit Polgar and her closest female rival was only widening. At the tender age of twelve, Judit passed Maya Chiburdanidze on the rating list, and since then she has never been challenged as the Top

[1]. In cricket, the term 'carry the bat' refers to an opening batsman who is not dismissed (a.k.a. 'out') when the team innings is closed. The 'man of the match' title is usually awarded to the player whose contribution is seen as the most critical in winning the game.

Hou Yifan turned in a spectacular 2872 performance, tying for first alongside Nigel Short in the world's strongest open tournament. Along the way, she met seven 2700+ players, defeating four of them, including Judit Polgar.

Woman in the world. Now, for the first time, it appears that gap may be starting to close.

Hou Yifan was not the *only* story in Gibraltar, but her result was the most surprising. Hou turned in a spectacular 2872 performance, tying for first alongside Nigel Short in the world's strongest open tournament. Along the way, she played seven of the eleven players rated 2700 or above, defeating four of them, including Polgar.

Hou gained thirty-four rating points and, as of March 1st, she will be not only solidly number two in the world among women, but a mere ten or fifteen points away from entering the Top 100 list.

It was Hou's first trip to Gibraltar, and she was awarded £22,600 (over $35,000) for her efforts.

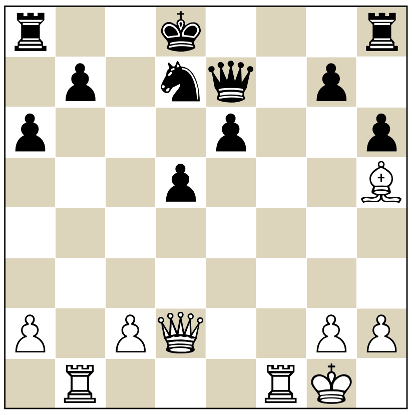
Short is a veteran of the Gibraltar Masters, having finished second in 2003, 2006 and 2011. For the 10th anniversary tournament, he finally nailed the top spot, albeit by winning a blitz tie-break (worth £8,000) over Hou. In all, Short nabbed the £20,000 first prize, plus a special £5,000 'Commonwealth' prize awarded in honour of the sixty year reign of Queen Elizabeth.

Remarkably, Short's second place finish last year came after scoring 8½ – half a point more than his total this year – but he was still edged out by Vasily Ivanchuk (see 'Ivanchuk Unstoppable in Gibraltar', New In Chess 2011/2), in what was surely one of the best results ever in an open tournament.

The 2012 edition was significantly stronger, however, prompting Michael Adams to predict at the half-way mark that 7½ or 8 would be the winning score. Adams, the winner in 2010, led the tournament until the ninth round, but three draws down the stretch left him in third place at the finish, tied with Mamedyarov, Victor Bologan, and Emil Sutovsky.

Hou meanwhile, after stumbling in the fifth round against Krishnan Sasikiran, put together a four-game winning streak, including back-to-back points against Polgar, Le Quang Liem and Alexey Shirov. The ninth round win over Shirov was particularly critical, as it came with the black pieces and gave her a half point lead over the field going into the last round.

Shirov used over an hour to reach move twenty, while Hou moved quickly and confidently by comparison.



Shirov-Hou Yifan (9)
position after 19...♘d7

She had reached the same position last year against Nadezhda Kosintseva in the Rostov Grand Prix tournament. Instead of Kosintseva's 20.♖f7, Shirov tried the logical 20.♖xb7, but Hou soon managed to exchange off the dangerous rook and then the queens, and was left with strong central pawns in the endgame. By move thirty, Shirov was down to a minute, as Hou prepared to march her passed pawns down the board.

> 'Nerves of steel! She doesn't crack – she can beat all these players, she can!'

'Nerves of steel', GM Simon Williams repeatedly praised during his live online commentary of the exciting climax. 'She doesn't crack – she can beat all these players, she can!'

Despite the bishop's theoretical advantage over the knight in endgames with pawns on both sides, Hou meticulously centralized her king and shepherded her e-pawn to victory.

And with that, she was not only in strong contention to win the tournament, but as luck would have it, the last round pairings necessitated that Hou receive a sixth white versus Mamedyarov. Plus, regardless of her final result, she had already put a lock on the £10,000 prize for the highest scoring woman, a prize many had assumed would be Polgar's for the taking.

Few of the best women in the world ever have the chance to play against Judit Polgar. She has never played in women-only events, and the rating differential is so large that even in the rare event where it would be possible – like last year's European Championship – the chances are slim to none.

Gibraltar is well-known for attracting an unusually high percentage of women, and Polgar faced three, drawing with World Championship challenger Humpy Koneru and beating Mariya Muzychuk, in addition to her game with Hou – Polgar's only defeat. After the tournament she said that Hou was a 'different player', implying that her strength had outpaced her rating.

Hou's success, and their head-to-head encounter, which grabbed international headlines, naturally prompted a new round of calls for a match between the World Champion and the world number one. The idea may have seemed outlandish when more than a hundred points separated the two, but now it could be quite competitive, and would surely generate interest among chess fans worldwide.

Polgar has been approached about holding such a match with Hou before, and said she would be open to the prospect, under the right conditions. There has been interest in China, according to Polgar, but so far she hasn't seen a serious proposal.

MACAULEY PETERSON

Nigel Short: 'If you're Anand or Carlsen, then you can make good money, but the moment you start dropping a bit, a few thousand pounds here and there is a lot of money.'

Hou was wary of making too much out of one tournament, as amazing as it may have been. 'This time I played very well, but it's only a tournament and not like your real rating, or something else', she said after the closing ceremony. 'I still have a long way and am not in the same level. I have a long distance.'

More than anything, Hou saw the chance to play so many 2700 players as a tremendous learning experience, and was not out to prove something, seeming to downplay the historical significance of her pairing with Polgar. Hou said that she has wondered why most men play so much better than women, but that it's not a topic she has considered deeply. She simply hasn't thought too much about gender differences, nature versus nurture, and so on.

'Judit was very strong when she was very young, and she achieved many many amazing results in chess', said Hou, but she doesn't expect to follow Polgar's lead and give up on women's events any time soon.

The Short Story

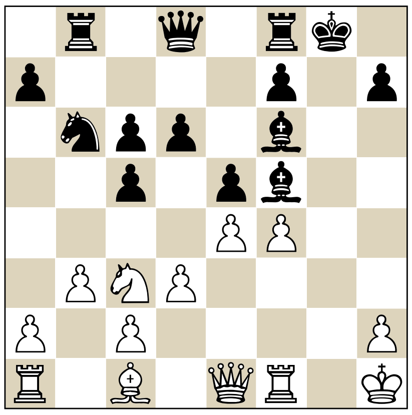
Short finished strong, including two black wins, the last against Sasikiran in a Benoni. He forced Sasikiran to spend a lot of time in the opening, which paid dividends in the ensuing tense middlegame. 'I wanted a bit of bite. I didn't want to get one of these kind of sterile theoretical Catalan positions with white having a little plus, and I'll probably draw it but maybe I won't. I wanted him to have the possibility of losing. That was really my idea. I didn't want a sort of nagging little edge, because then, yeah, things can happen in the last round. I went for it actually, and it was a good choice.'

The win in that 'crunch encounter', as Short called it, proved to be necessary to catch Hou and reach the tiebreak.

'Yifan played a brilliant tournament – absolutely great. You work really hard for ten days, and then it's just a lottery', Nigel said when we spoke the next day in his spacious suite at the Caleta Hotel. 'Of course the title is something, but essentially we tied for first. In the first game I basically outplayed her, except I hung a piece which she didn't see, and then "normal service" resumed.'

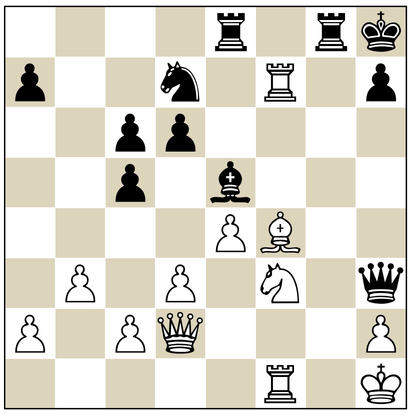
SI 49.5 – D23
Nigel Short
Hou Yifan
Gibraltar 2012 (1.1)

1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 d6 3.f4 g6 4.♘f3 ♗g7 5.♗b5+ ♘c6 5...♗d7 is usually played, as the exchange on c6 is generally good for White in practice. **6.♗xc6+ bxc6 7.d3 ♘f6 8.0-0 0-0 9.♔h1 ♖b8 10.♕e1 ♘d7 11.b3 e5 12.f5 gxf5 13.♘h4 f4 14.g3 ♗f6 15.♘f5 ♘b6 16.gxf4 ♗xf5**



17.fxe5? After 17.exf5 exf4 18.♗xf4 ♘d5 19.♘xd5 cxd5 White has some initiative. **17...♗xe5?** 17...♗h4 simple keeps the extra piece. 18.♕e2 ♗g6 'It must be lost, but it was at least not "resigns" instantly.' (Short) **18.♖xf5 ♔h8 19.♗f4 ♘d7 20.♕d2 ♕h4** Going the other way. 20...♕a5 aiming to exchange queens offered better chances at survival: 21.♖g1 (21.♘b1

♕xd2 22.♗xe5+ ♘xe5 23.♘xd2) 21...♖g8 (21...♗xc3? 22.♗e5+) 22.♘e2 ♕xd2 23.♗xd2. **21.♖f1 ♖be8 22.♘e2 ♖g8 23.♖xf7 ♕h3 24.♘g1 ♕g4 25.♘f3 ♕h3**



26.♕f2 26.♗xe5+! wins immediately, since after 26...♖xe5 (26...dxe5 or 26...♘xe5 are both met by 27.♘g5 and ♖xh7+) 27.♘xe5 ♘xe5 28.♖f8 ♖xf8 29.♖xf8+ ♔g7 30.♕f4 Black's king is too weak to last long. **26...♗xf4 27.♖xf4 ♖g6?** The final mistake, played with about a 1:45 left on the clock. 27...♖ef8 28.♘g5 ♖xf4 29.♘xh3 ♖xf2 30.♖xf2, and White still has a little work to do. **28.♘h4 ♖g5 29.♘f5 ♖eg8 30.♘xd6 ♘e5 31.♘f7+ ♘xf7 32.♖xf7 ♖5g6 33.♖f8 ♕h5 34.♖xg8+ ♖xg8 35.♕f6+ ♖g7 36.♖g1** Black resigned.

Short played solidly in the second playoff game, exchanging off pieces whenever possible. Michael Adams on the live webcast concluded that Hou, 'got a bit trapped by the must-win situation and she started to play very aggressive, but I think from the opening she has to accept that if she was going to win the game it was going to be a long endgame and she could grind, and maybe that was the way to try and put pressure.' Hou gave up a pawn, going for an attack, but it proved elusive, and she was soon forced to concede a draw and the match.

> 'I do remember saying to her that the second book to be published in the English language was a chess book.'

The playoff win was not exactly poetic justice, but, as Short pointed out, he has been painfully on the losing side of several tie-breaks in recent memory.

'I understand the desire of organizers to have a winner, and I don't mind playing some sort of blitz or whatever for the title. The thing was I had this playoff at the British Championship, and I lost to Mickey, and I would have beaten him on any single tiebreak you care to mention,' Short lamented, 'but there we had a playoff.'

At the Commonwealth Championship, Gawain Jones was the winner on

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Outside Nigel Short's front door was a spacious private deck, overlooking the Mediterranean to the East.

the Sonneborn-Berger tiebreak system, for which Short has even greater disdain. 'You know, some guy you played in the first or second round happens to lose some position down on board 211 that he should have won, and therefore, as a professional player, you get the rough end of the draw.'

Short suggested that the real problem is that the playoff was for £8,000 pounds, a nontrivial sum. 'The life of a chess player is very difficult – the professional life – unless you are one of the absolute elite. If you're Anand or Carlsen or one of these guys, then you can make good money, but the moment you start dropping a bit, a few thousand pounds here and there is a lot of money.'

On the other hand, life at the *Caleta*, where the tournament has been held since its inception in 2003, is comparatively easy. Outside Nigel's front door was a spacious private deck, overlooking the Mediterranean to the East, as do half the rooms in the hotel, including the main playing hall.

In the mornings he would get up around 8:00 to watch cricket, live from Dubai, until they broke for lunch, which conveniently provided just enough time for Nigel to go for breakfast. The afternoon cricket session would accompany a little preparation for the day's round. But not too much. 'I have a sort of rule of about two hours, and I reckon it's really counterproductive to do more than that.'

He recounted the success of the English cricket squad last year, when they 'trounced' Australia. 'After we beat Australia in this famous series, the Queen more or less gave the entire team MBEs.'

MBE stands for 'Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire', and Short was awarded one himself, in 1999, for 'services to chess'.

'It's a bit of recognition. They do give out a lot of them, but they don't give them to everyone, so it's very good. There aren't any chess knights. I mean if you think in history, it was only Sir George Thomas.' (See Sidebar: Order of the British Empire)

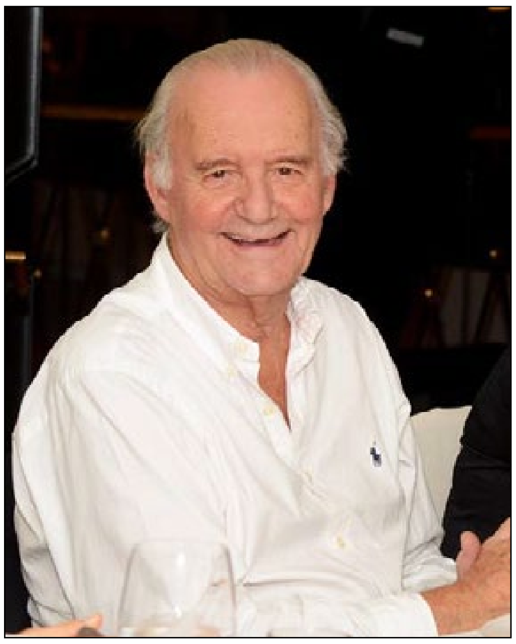
Notable performances

Among the sixteen players finishing with seven points, two stand out. First, David Howell, for picking up eighteen rating points, and fighting extremely hard. His draw with Polgar, and loss to Adams were two of the longest games played in Gibraltar. Coming back the next day to beat Victor Laznicka with black was extremely impressive and Howell annotates the game below.

Second, Berg, whose last round Najdorf win is one of the finest games you'll see all year. It won the £1,000 best game prize, amid stiff competition.

Order of the British Empire

The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire is an order of chivalry, established in 1917 by King George V. There are five classes: MBE is the lowest and GBE (Knight Grand Cross) is the highest. The honour is personally given by the Her Majesty the Queen. 'I met the Queen', recounted Short, 'You have to put these fancy clothes on – it's nice. And, you know, the Queen – she has had a lot of these things – so there's a little procedure... She asks one or two questions.' Unfortunately Nigel could not remember what he was asked, but, he said, 'I do remember saying to her that the second book to be published in the English language was a chess book, and I said 'and you have a copy' *[laughs boisterously]*, because I happened to know that. It came as a bit of a surprise to her, but it's worth an absolute fortune of course.'



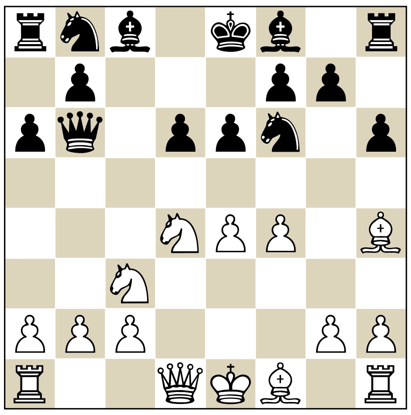
Brian Callahan, the founder of the Gibraltar Chess Festival

One rank above MBE is OBE (Officer of...), and on March 14th, **Brian Callahan,** the founder of the Gibraltar Chess Festival, will be granted this distinction.

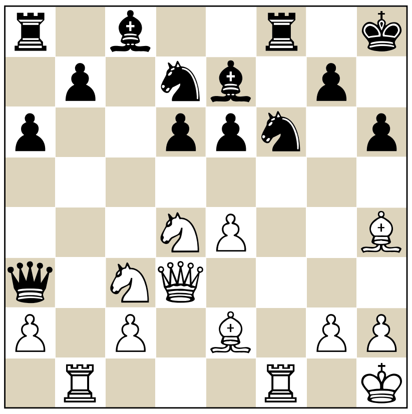
▶

SI 4.8 – B96
Emanuel Berg
Maxime Vachier-Lagrave
Gibraltar 2012 (10)

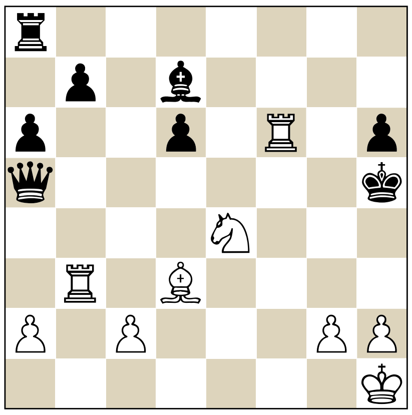
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗g5 e6 7.f4 h6 Going for the 'Delayed Poisoned Pawn'. The inclusion of ...h6 has become popular lately. **8.♗h4 ♕b6**



9.♕d3 9.♕d2 is the main line, but Berg had prepared 9.♕d3 that morning, and noticed that Vachier-Lagrave had not played any tournament games against this move. 9.♕d3 aims to take advantage of the weakened g6 square later. **9...♕xb2 10.♖b1 ♕a3 11.f5** A main move without the inclusion of 7...h6 8.♗h4. So the question is: what is the difference here? (Berg) **11...♗e7 12.fxe6 fxe6 13.♗e2 0-0 14.0-0 ♔h8** Berg had the idea that in case of 14...♘c6 15.♘xc6 bxc6 he'd go 16.♘d5! ♕xd3 17.♘xe7+ ♔f7 18.cxd3 ♔xe7 19.e5 dxe5 20.♗f3. He briefly had a look at this position, and thought White had compensation and some initiative in an interesting endgame. **15.♔h1** Preparing to play e5 by sidestepping a check in the line 15.e5 dxe5 16.♕g6 ♕xc3 17.♗d3 ♕xd4+ and White loses after 18.♔h1 e4 or 18.♗f2 ♕g4. **15...♘bd7** Stopping e5, but allowing a spectacular queen sacrifice.



16.♘xe6! ♘e5 Otherwise White is clearly better. **17.♘xf8 ♘xd3 18.♘g6+ ♔h7 19.♗xd3 ♔xg6 20.e5+** Both a positional and a tactical sacrifice. Even if the attack is not winning, White still has a very nice position (Berg). **20...♔h5** 20...♔f7 21.exf6 gxf6 22.♘d5 is excellent for White. **21.exf6 ♗xf6** Berg expected 21...♕xc3 22.fxe7 ♗d7, and White is winning but has to find some precise moves. **22.♗xf6 gxf6** Black would love to play ...f5 to get his king back to safety, but there isn't time. Berg plays for mate. **23.♖b3 ♕a5 24.♖xf6 ♗d7 25.♘e4**



25...♗g4 Lovely mates abound. E. g. 25...♖b8 26.♗e2+ ♗g4 27.♖h3 mate would be a nice finish. Or 25...♖g8 26.♗e2+ ♔h4 27.♖h3+ ♗xh3 28.g3+ ♖xg3 29.hxg3 mate. On 25...♕e1+ simply 26.♖f1 threatening ♘f6+ picking up the bishop. **26.h3 ♖g8 27.hxg4+ ♖xg4 28.♗e2 ♕e1+ 29.♔h2** Threatening mate on h3, and if 29...♕xe2 then 30.♖h3+ ♖h4 31.♖xh4+ ♔xh4 32.♖f4+ ♕g4 33.g3+ and 34.♘f6+ decides. Black resigned.

Hou Yifan took home the second prize, the first women's prize and the first prize for juniors (Under-18). If she returns in 2013, at least that's *one* prize her opponent's won't have to fight her for: Hou turns 18 years old on February 27th.

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NOTES BY
Nigel Short

BI 9.7 – A62
Krishnan Sasikiran
Nigel Short
Gibraltar 2012 (10)

I shall have very fond memories of the 2012 Tradewise Gibraltar Masters for many years to come. Without wishing to sound immodest, winning a tournament of this calibre is extremely difficult and gives one further cause to reflect on the tough life of a chess professional. In fact, I scored more points and arguably played even better the previous year, but even that was only good enough for second place, behind the brilliant Vasily Ivanchuk, on steroids.

This time, after eight rounds I was again on an excellent (undefeated) score of 6 points, comfortably exceeding expectations. Nevertheless, an ordinary one out of two finish would have left me with just a few hundred pounds to show for my not inconsiderable labours. In such a pool of sharks, it is not enough to play above your level to succeed – one has to truly excel. In the ninth round I was paired against AR Saleh Salem. While this young improving UAE Grandmaster is a perfectly decent player, with the greatest of respect, it was about as favourable a pairing as I could hope to get at the business end of a tournament. Thankfully I made the most of the opportunity. The last round against the Indian number 2 promised to be much tougher...

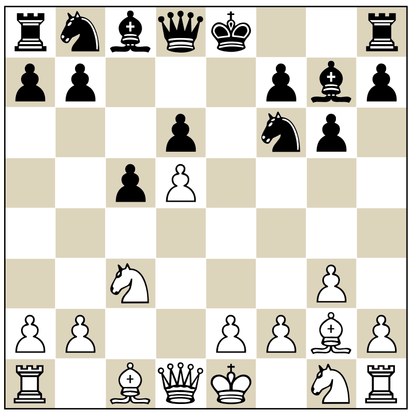
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 c5

The Benoni has not really been a part of my repertoire since 1983, when I abandoned it after suffering a couple of heavy defeats. I only resurrected it 27 years later, during my match with Anish Giri in 2010, for the simple reason that I had done zero preparation and had no openings left to play. Surprisingly I easily obtained a good (later winning) position which drove me to the conclusion that it was perhaps worth re-examining.

4.d5

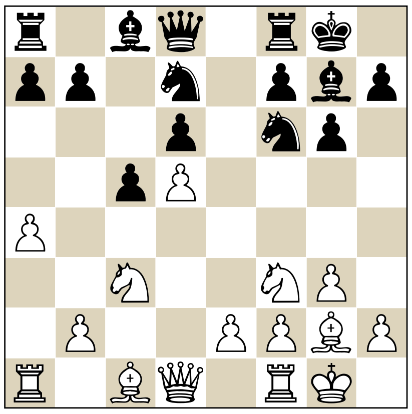
Of course the flexible 4.♘f3 is a reasonable alternative, but one that also leaves Black with a wide range of satisfactory options.

4...exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.♘c3 g6 7.♗g2 ♗g7



The Benoni has a somewhat dubious reputation, but a cursory glance is enough to reveal why I think it is playable – at least against the g3 line. White's fianchettoed bishop gazes restrictedly at his d5 pawn, whereas his counterpart on g7 has a beautiful long diagonal at his disposal. Furthermore, White has one fewer piece correctly placed to inhibit the standard ...b5 break. That said, it is still a Benoni, with all the misery that a cramped position usually implies...

8.♘f3 0-0 9.0-0 ♘bd7 10.a4



10...h6

This novelty perhaps requires a little explanation. After my aforementioned game against Giri, I asked my old buddy Garry K. why Black usually plays ...a6 in this line. It seemed to me,

▶ His appointment is for services to chess and tourism, since the Chess Festival has become a significant tourist draw for the small autonomous British territory.

Few chess players have been awarded honorary titles from Her Majesty for services to chess. The first, in 1966, was **Harry Golombek**, a three-time British champion, arbiter, and author. He was a correspondent for *The Times* newspaper, editor of *British Chess Magazine*, and represented England during nine Olympiads.

David Anderton – A judge, and former English Olympiad team captain, appointed an OBE for services to chess in 1976.

Bob Wade became an OBE in 1979. A contemporary of Golombek, Wade was twice British champion and played in seven Olympiads, among many other accolades.

Ray Keene, a grandmaster and prolific author, was appointed an OBE in 1985.

Other chess players have been appointed as OBE for non-chess-related reasons. These include:

B.H. Wood – Founded *Chess Magazine* in 1935 and edited it for over fifty years.

Jonathan Penrose – Renowned professor of genetics, and ten-time British champion.

Stuart Milner-Barry – A leading codebreaker during World War II. He and Golombek had to abandon the 1939 Olympiad in Buenos Aires and return to England following Britain's declaration of war.

Finally, **Sir George Thomas** – British Champion in 1923 and 1934. His honorary 'Sir' might give the impression that he was knighted by the King – an even higher honour than the OBE. In fact, it is an hereditary title; when his father died in 1918, 'Sir George' became a baronet – above a knight, but below a baron. In 1935 he tied for first with Max Euwe and Salo Flohr at Hastings, where he defeated both Capablanca and the twenty-three-year-old Botvinnik.

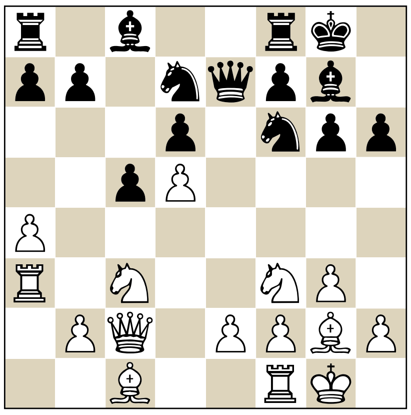
So (with a touch of irony), there *still* aren't *any* chess knights.

a touch naively, that it creates a weakness on b6 which White often exploits, typically by inserting a knight. Obviously, on the plus side, ...a6 prepares ...b5, but Garry intrigued me by answering that it also allows the queen to be developed on c7. It was an interesting thought, but it was still by no means clear why I should want my queen there.

So, instead I started considering alternative plans of development. As a general rule, ...♖e8 is a good move in the Benoni. However, the g3 line is an oddity in that ...f5 is often required and in such cases the rook will be better placed on f8. Indeed, in the most famous game in this line, Kortchnoi-Kasparov, Luzern Olympiad 1982 (one of the most exciting games I have ever witnessed, incidentally) the young Soviet played 10...♖e8, only to move it back to f8 just five moves later! I'll be damned if I am going to do that, I thought. I'll try and save some time by leaving the rook where it is. Hence I came up with ...h6, which is primarily directed against ♗f4. The active bishop would (after protecting the d-pawn) be driven back by ...g5 or ...♘h5 (without allowing an irritating ♗g5). It won't win a prize for novelty of the year, but it is not so stupid either...

11.♕c2 ♕e7 12.♖a3!?

This was criticised by at least one subsequent annotator, who obviously didn't get the point. Possession of very powerful analysis engines does not, of itself, provide any understanding.



12...a6

Changing tack. I began considering the more subtle 12...♖b8 but then started to become concerned about ideas like 13.♘b5 a6 14.♖e3!?, harassing the black queen. Even here Black can safely continue 14...♕d8 15.♘xd6 ♘xd5, but it seemed pragmatic to cut out such tricky crap once and for all.

13.♘d2

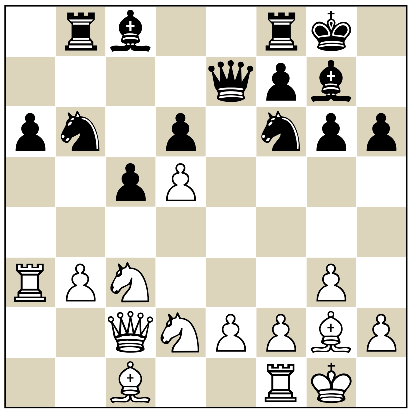
Heading for b6!

13...♖b8 14.a5

14.♘c4 is best met by 14...♘e5 15.♘b6 ♘fd7.

14...b5 15.axb6 ♘xb6 16.b3

16.♘b3 ♘c4 17.♖a4 ♘b6 is a draw, but Sasikiran is no wimp.



16...♘g4! 17.♗b2

Exploiting the fact that 17.h3 allows the tactic 17...♘e3! 18.fxe3 ♕xe3+ 19.♔h2 ♕xc3 20.♕xc3 ♗xc3 21.♘e4 ♗e5 22.♗xh6 ♖e8 with counterplay.

17...f5 18.e3

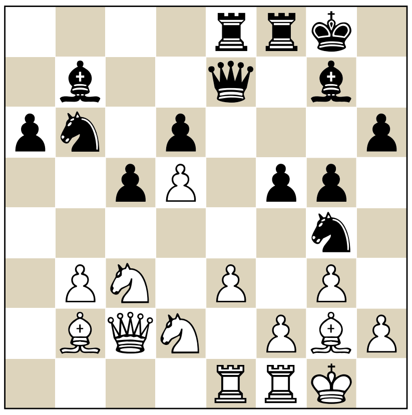
Cautious, but wise.

18.♖aa1 f4! 19.♕xg6 ♗f5 20.♕h5 ♘e3! is the sort of chaotic melee that can happen if White is not careful.

18...g5 19.♖aa1

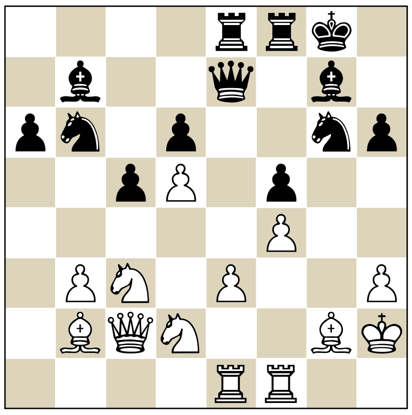
Returning to where it is most needed.

19...♗b7 20.♖ae1 ♖be8



21.h3 ♘e5 22.f4 ♘g6 23.♔h2 gxf4 24.gxf4

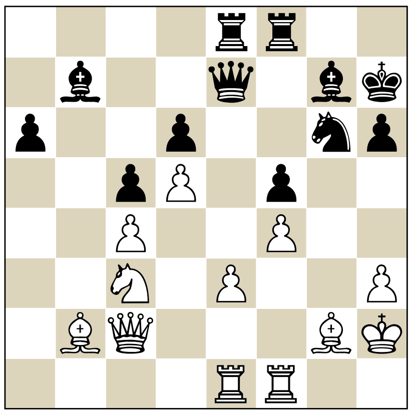
Both sides have reason enough to be happy. Black's knight has been driven back from its strong position but he nevertheless retains sufficient activity to maintain the balance.



24...♔h7

I spent a minute or two considering 24...♗xc3 25.♕xc3 ♘xd5 but rejected it on general principles. It felt horribly wrong and indeed it is: 26.♗xd5+ ♗xd5 27.♖g1 ♔h7 28.e4! (28.♖xg6 ♔xg6 is very scary too) 28...fxe4 29.♘xe4 which I saw, is one-way traffic. The computer provides a sample denouement: 29...♗xe4 30.♖xe4 ♕f7 31.f5 ♘e5 32.♕e3 ♕xf5 33.♕xh6+! ♔xh6 34.♖h4+ ♕h5 35.♗c1+.

25.♘c4 ♘xc4 26.bxc4

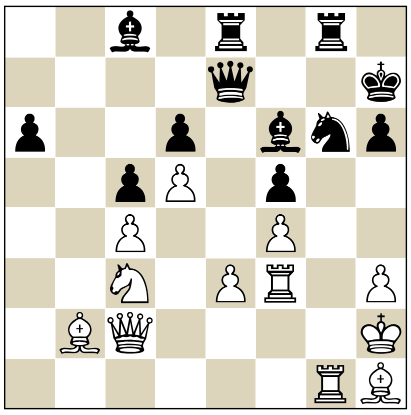


26...♗c8

Lavishly praised by Ray Keene in an e-mail to me. To be honest, I didn't see what my bishop was doing on b7 now that the diagonal had been effectively closed and so I made the move rather quickly.

27.♖f3 ♖g8 28.♖g1 ♗f6 29.♗h1?

Finally White snaps in time pressure. I had expected 29.♗f1 ♘h4 30.♖fg3 ♗d7 with an unclear position.



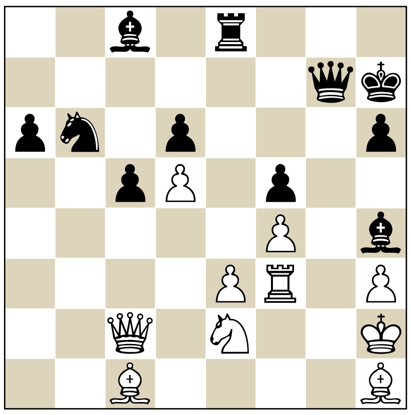
29...♘e5!!

It is easy to understand how my opponent missed this. The knight unexpectedly returns whence it was attacked! I had not even been threatening this move, but his erroneous bishop retreat suddenly allows an opportunistic blow.

30.♖fg3

I had not seen the exact win after 30.fxe5, however I had seen that, if nothing else I could play 30...♗xe5+ 31.♖f4 ♗xf4+ 32.exf4 ♖xg1 33.♔xg1 ♕e1+ 34.♔h2 ♖e3 (34...h5!! intending ...h4 and ♕g3 mate is absolutely devastating) 35.♕g2 ♖xc3 leaving me a clear pawn up. There is a reasonable chance, but no certainty, I would have found the right way had he entered this line. Now, though, it is easier.

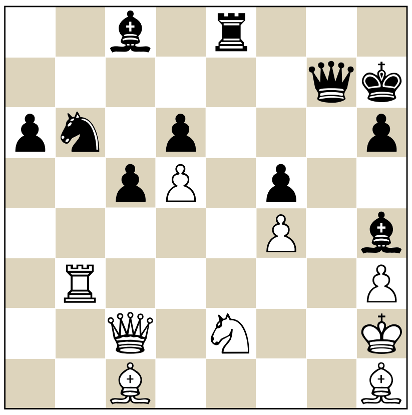
30...♖xg3 31.♖xg3 ♘xc4 32.♗c1 ♗h4 33.♖f3 ♕g7 34.♘e2 ♘b6



35.e4?!

Objectively a bad move, but it is understandable that White seeks to turn the tables in the mad rush to move 40.

35...♖xe4 36.♖b3 ♖e8!



37.♗f3

The knight is untouchable. 37.♖xb6? ♖xe2+ 38.♕xe2 ♕g3 mate.

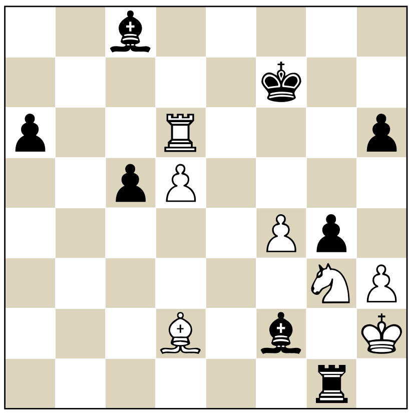
37...♗f2

With a mating idea on g1 now.

38.♗g4 ♕g6

Not the only way, but probably the simplest. This forces off the queens.

39.♖xb6 fxg4 40.♕xg6+ ♔xg6 41.♖xd6+ ♔f7 42.♘g3 ♖e1 43.♗d2 ♖g1



44.♖f6+

This came as a complete shock to me, but thankfully it loses hopelessly.

I had correctly calculated 44.♖d8 ♖xg3 45.♖xc8 ♖d3 46.♗a5 ♗g3+! 47.♔g2 (47.♔g1 gxh3) 47...gxh3+ 48.♔xh3 ♗e1+ picking off the bishop, but it was probably a better try to let me demonstrate this.

44...♔xf6 45.♘e4+ ♔f7 46.♘xf2 ♖a1 47.hxg4 ♖a2 48.♗e3 ♗xg4 49.♔g3 ♗f5 50.♗xc5 ♖a5

White resigned.

NOTES BY

Hou Yifan

SI 39.14 – B46
Hou Yifan
Judit Polgar
Gibraltar 2012 (7)

I brushed past by Gibraltar several times, but finally I actually made it for the 10th anniversary of the festival. This year's Gibraltar Tradewise Festival attracted many top players, in particular my opponent of this round ☺.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗e2 ♘ge7!?

This move is not main stream theory and it surprised me for a moment. The idea is to take on d4 and move the other knight to c6.

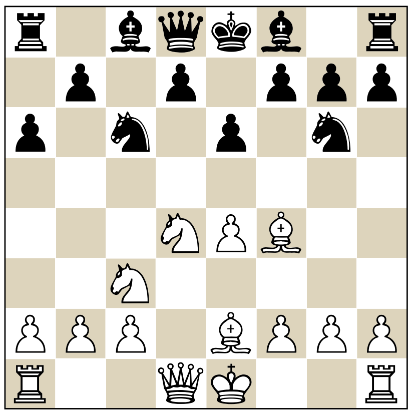
Usually she plays the main line of the Taimanov Variation: 6...♕c7 7.0-0 ♘f6.

7.♗f4

This looks normal. I want to control the d6 square, which just became a little weak after 6...♘ge7.

Another choice here is 7.♗e3 ♘xd4 8.♕xd4 b5 (8...♘c6 9.♕b6!?) 9.0-0 ♘c6 10.♕d2 ♗e7.

7...♘g6



8.♘xc6

I wasn't sure here whether to exchange her knight and go into an unclear endgame, or to keep the pieces on the board and make the position complicated. After a long think I decided to go for the simple way.

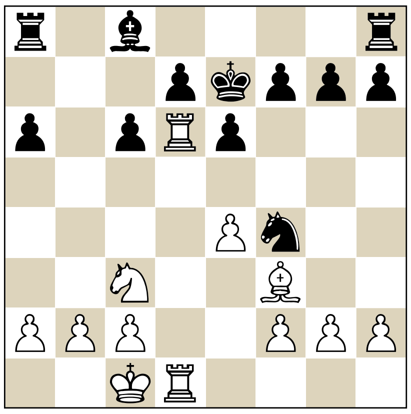
The alternative was 8.♗g3 ♗e7 9.h4 (an interesting sacrifice!) 9...♗xh4

MACAULEY PETERSON

Hou Yifan's progress and her win against Judit Polgar in Gibraltar will surely generate interest in a match between the Women's World Champion and the highest rated woman.

(9...♘xh4!? is interesting, intending to keep the dark-squared bishop and prevent White from taking control of a series of dark squares) 10.♘xc6 bxc6 11.♗xh4 ♘xh4 12.♕d4 0-0 13.e5 ♘g6 14.♗d3 f5, with a comfortable position for Black in Svidler-Volokitin, 2002.

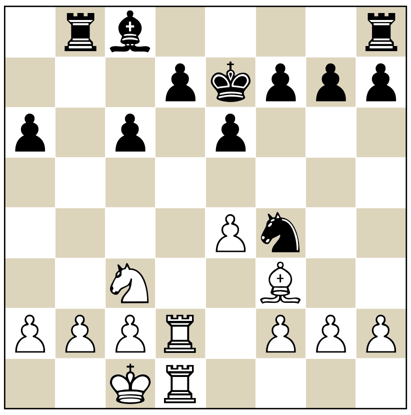
8...bxc6 9.♗d6 ♗xd6 10.♕xd6 ♕e7 11.0-0-0 ♕xd6 12.♖xd6 ♔e7 13.♖hd1!? ♘f4 14.♗f3



14...♖b8

I had been a little bit worried about 14...♘d5 15.exd5 ♔xd6 16.dxc6+ ♔c7 17.cxd7 ♗b7! (the move that I had missed when playing 9.♗d6) 18.♗xb7 ♔xb7 19.♘e4 ♖hd8 20.♘c5+ ♔c6 21.b4 a5 22.a3 axb4 23.axb4 ♖ab8 (I had calculated up to here and thought that 23...♖a1+ 24.♔d2 ♖xd1+ 25.♔xd1 ♖a8 26.c4 was totally comfortable for White) 24.c3 ♖b5! 25.♔c2 ♖xc5 26.bxc5 ♔xc5 – this is the easier way for Black to keep an equal position: by just waiting there.

15.♖6d2



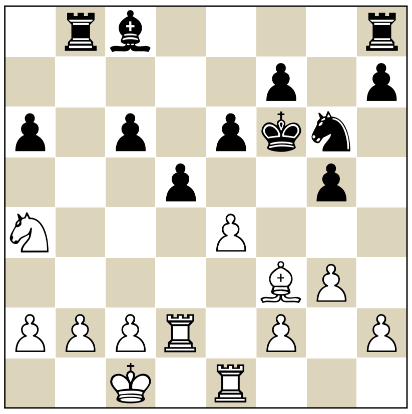
15...g5!? An interesting move, pushing the pawn before the knight goes back to g6, in order to control the dark squares.

15...e5 looks normal and has been played a few times before. The idea is to bring the knight back to the e6 square, which is a more active place than g6. In the meantime, it also stops White's idea of e5: the position after 16.♘b1!? (pointed out by the engine) 16...♘e6 17.♘a3 f6 18.c3 is easier to play for White.

16.♘a4

Planning c4, which is why Judit plays ...d5 immediately.

16...d5 17.g3 ♘g6 18.♖e1 ♔f6



19.♗h5

During the game I hesitated between the text-move and 19.b3. Actually, this latter move looks more natural after, say, 19...h5 20.♗e2 h4 21.♘c5 a5 22.c4, and Black's light-squared bishop is in a terrible place and it's not easy for it to get out.

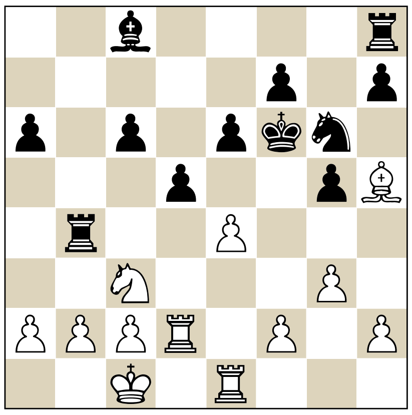
19...♖b4!

I had missed this when I played 19.♗h5!

20.♘c3

A solid choice to keep a balanced position.

If 20.♘c5 ♖c4 21.♘d3 ♖xe4 22.♖xe4 dxe4 23.♘c5 ♔e5! 24.b4 f5 25.♗e2 ♘e7 26.♗xa6 e3! 27.fxe3 ♗xa6 28.♘xa6 ♘d5 then the king on e5, the active knight and the central pawns offer Black enough compensation.

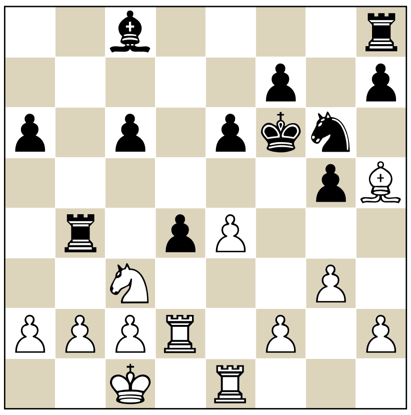


20...d4? A dubious move. Maybe Judit had missed my next move.

Against my threat of taking on d5, Black should choose between:

A) 20...a5!? 21.b3 ♖f8 22.♔b2;

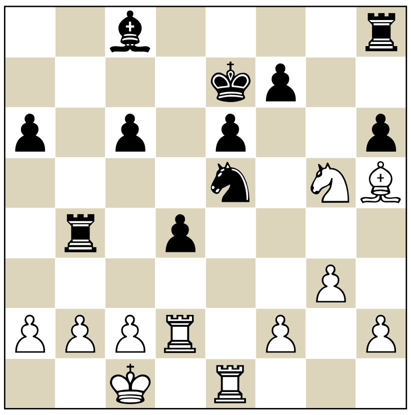
B) and 20...♖b7 21.f4!?. During the game I calculated the following: 21...gxf4 22.gxf4 ♘xf4 23.♖f2 ♔g5! 24.♖g1+ ♔xh5 25.♖xf4, and I thought this position is absolutely hazardous for Black, so I stopped here, but now that I am checking it with the engine, it tells me that this is totally equal! In spite of this, my feeling tells me that I would still prefer to play White here.



21.e5+! ♘xe5 22.♘e4+ ♔e7 23.♘xg5 h6?

A huge mistake that leads to a losing position.

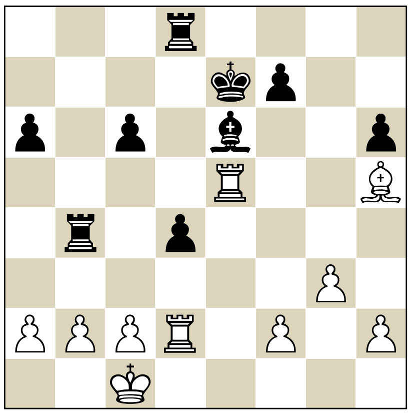
The only move was 23...f6 24.f4 (24.♘e4 ♖d8; 24.a3 ♖b5) 24...fxg5 25.♖xe5 gxf4 26.gxf4 d3! 27.♖xd3 ♖xf4. What a comfortable position for White! Black has four isolated pawns with a bishop on its starting square. However, there is no clear way to exploit all this.



24.♘xe6! ♗xe6

24...♔xe6 is met by 25.f4 f6 26.fxe5 fxe5 27.b3! (an intelligent move! Also good, but less convincing, is 27.a3 ♖a4 28.b3 ♖xa3 29.♔b2 ♖a5 30.♖xd4) 27...♔d6 28.c3 ♖b5 29.cxd4, and White is winning.

25.♖xe5 ♖d8



26.f4?!

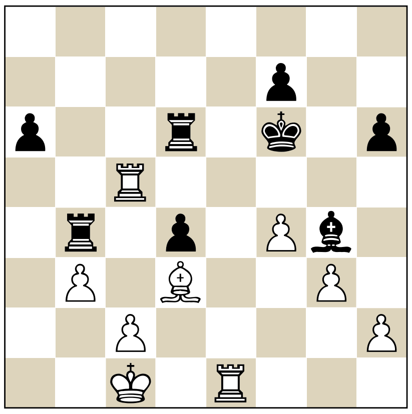
I didn't grab the chance to win immediately: 26.♗e2! ♖b6 27.b3, and you can see that control of the 5th rank is really important!

Therefore 26.♗f3 is weak because of 26...♖b5!.

26...♖b5 27.♖de2 ♔f6 28.♗f3 c5?!

A better choice here was 28...♗c4, although White keeps a clear advantage with 29.♖2e4.

29.a4 ♖b4 30.♖xc5 ♖xa4 31.b3 ♖b4 32.♗e4! ♗g4 33.♖e1 ♖d6 34.♗d3

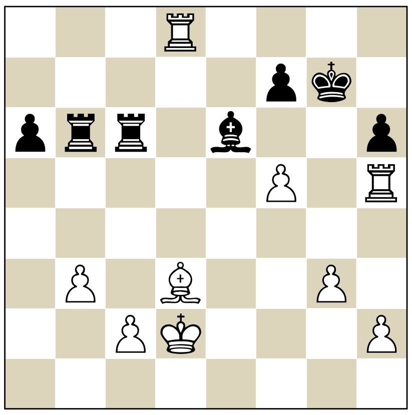


White is definitely winning here, as d4 and a6 are both weak and one of them will soon be lost.

34...♗d7 35.♖ee5 ♗e6 36.♔d2 ♖bb6 37.♖a5 ♖bc6 38.♖a4 ♖b6 39.♖e4

Now the d-pawn drops off.

39...♗f5 40.♖exd4 ♖e6 41.♗c4 ♖ec6 42.♖a5 ♗c8 43.♗d3 ♗e6 44.♖d8 ♗c8 45.♖ad5 ♗e6 46.♖h5 ♔g7 47.f5

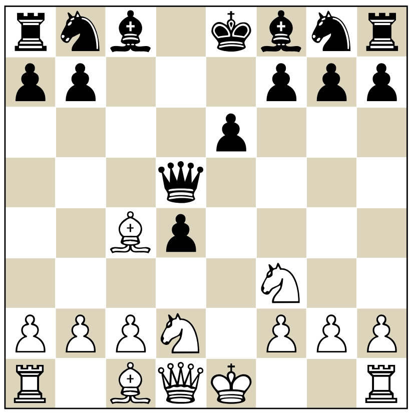


Black resigned.
Thanks for watching ☺.

NOTES BY
Michael Adams

FR 19.2 – C07
Michael Adams
Daniel Fridman
Gibraltar Open 2012 (3)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 c5 4.♘gf3 cxd4 5.exd5 ♕xd5 6.♗c4



6...♕d7

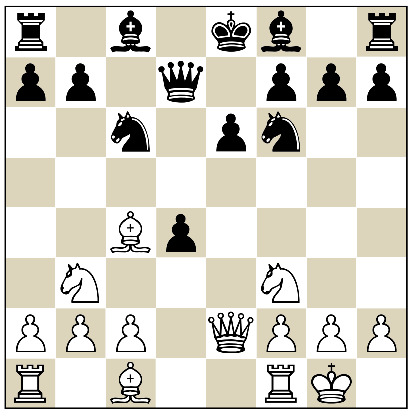
Although this move has been played a bit recently with some success, I was blissfully unaware of its existence.

7.0-0

7.♘b3, angling to castle queenside, was another interesting option.

7...♘c6 8.♘b3 ♘f6 9.♕e2

On the limited evidence available, 9.♘bxd4 could be considered the main move, but preparing to bring the rook to the d-file is also not bad.



9...a6

My cunning plan was that 9...♗e7 10.♖d1 looks more pleasant for White here than in the 6...♕d6 line, where with the queen on its more customary square Black has the option to play e5.

10.a4

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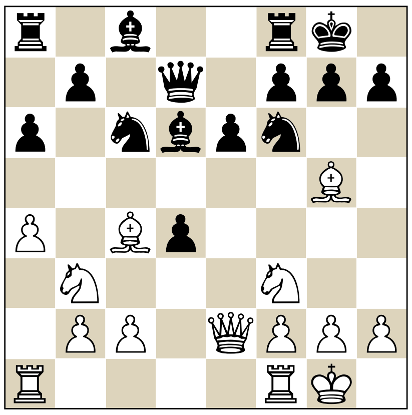
I was happy to prevent queenside expansion, as the light-squared bishop can't come to d7 at the moment, and it takes some time to deploy in the game, but 10.♖d1 b5 11.♗d3 was also possible.

10...♗d6 The alternative 10...♗e7 11.♖d1 ♕c7 12.♘bxd4 ♗d7 was a more solid but less inspiring option.

11.♗g5

The continuation 11.♖d1 e5 12.♘bxd4 ♘xd4 13.♘xd4 (13.♖xd4 looks interesting) 13...♕e7 as played in a previous game doesn't impress.

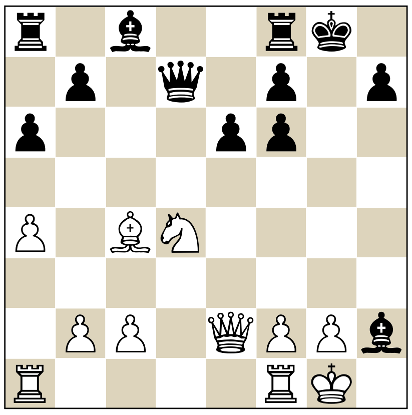
11...0-0 I was wondering about 11...♕c7, planning to hide the king on the queenside, but my opponent swiftly castled.



12.♗xf6 gxf6 13.♘bxd4

13.♖ad1 e5 14.c3 ♕e7 (14...dxc3 looks risky but may be alright) 15.cxd4 e4 16.♘h4 f5 17.g3 is hard to assess.

13...♘xd4 14.♘xd4 ♗xh2+

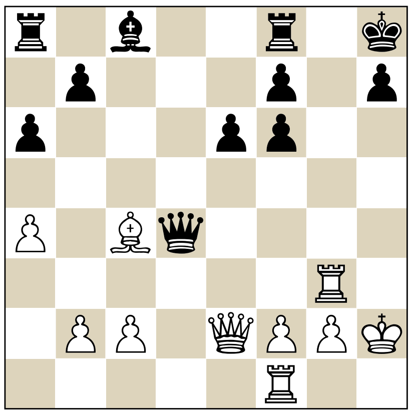


Black's play makes little sense unless he grabs this pawn.

15.♔xh2 ♕xd4 16.♖a3

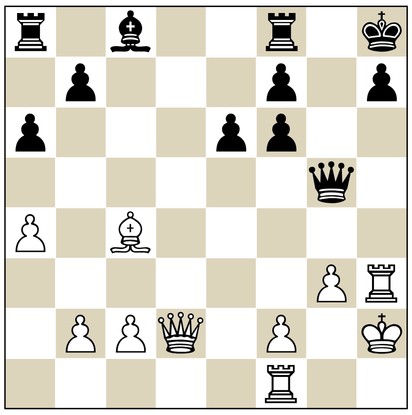
Daniel had missed this move, swinging the rook along the third rank. 16.f4 f5 isn't so promising.

16...♔h8 17.♖g3



17...♕h4+ Black plays it safe by offering the exchange of queens, but it was also possible to pin the rook with 17...♕f4 18.♕h5 ♗d7 (18...e5? 19.♗d3 e4 20.♗xe4 wins) 19.♖h1 ♖g8 20.♔g1 ♕f5 21.♕xf5 exf5 22.♖gh3 ♖g7 when despite Black's ugly structure he seems to be in reasonable shape.

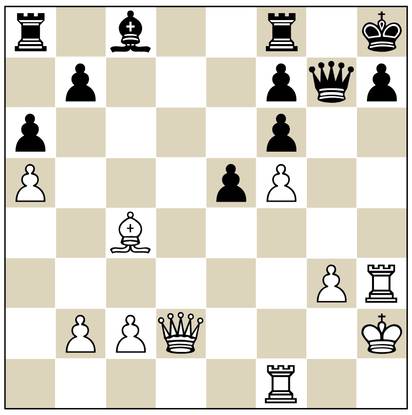
18.♖h3 ♕f4+ 19.g3 ♕e5 20.♕d2 ♕g5



21.f4 I was less convinced by 21.♕b4 ♗d7 22.♕xb7 ♗xa4.

21...♕g7 22.a5 An important move, clamping down on the queenside and impeding bishop development.

22...e5 23.f5



I thought Black was in considerable strife here, but as is often the case

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Michael Adams recovered from his atypical result at the London Chess Classic with a fine performance on the Rock.

matters are not so simple. Although Black's queenside forces are still living at home, the bishop does influence the action by eyeing the pawn on f5, and his king is now relatively safe.

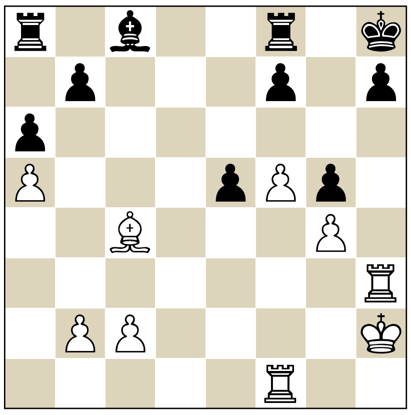
23...♕g5

Given that Black is not flush with options. it is none too impressive that I didn't notice that 23...♖g8 is possible here. Although Black still has no clear way to develop his pieces on the queenside it's not easy to land a glove on him.

24.♕xg5

I didn't like the look of 24.♕d3 b5 25.axb6 ♗b7.

24...fxg5 25.g4

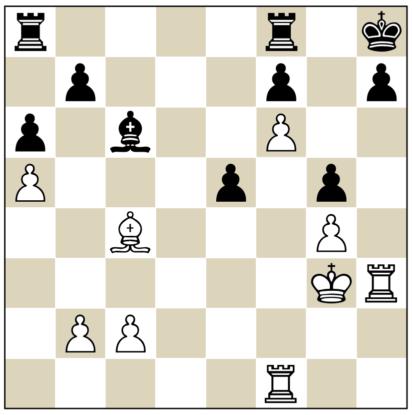


25...♗d7

The bishop must grab the chance to emerge, as 25...f6 26.♖d1 ♔g7 (26...e4 27.♖d4) 27.♖d6 gives White an iron grip on the position.

26.♔g3 ♗c6 27.f6

Imprisoning the black king is the only chance. 27.♖f2 ♔g7 28.f6+ ♔g6 29.♖fh2 ♔xf6 30.♖xh7 ♗e4 allows him to slip away.



27...♗e4

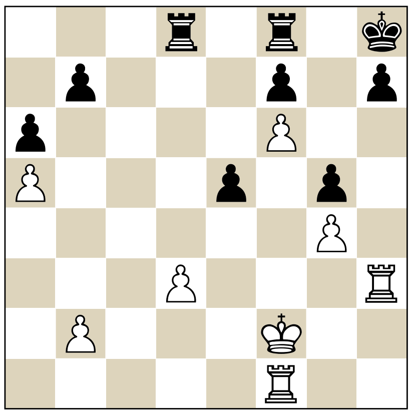
27...♖ad8 28.♗d3 ♖xd3+ 29.cxd3 ♖d8 30.♖d1 ♖d6 31.♖h6 keeps control.

28.♗d3 ♗xd3

White has all the play after 28...♗g6 29.♗f5 ♔g8 30.♖fh1 h5 31.♖xh5 ♗xh5 32.♖xh5.

29.cxd3 ♖ad8 30.♔f2

I took the opportunity to centralize my king, as 30.♔g2 ♖d4 solves Black's problems.



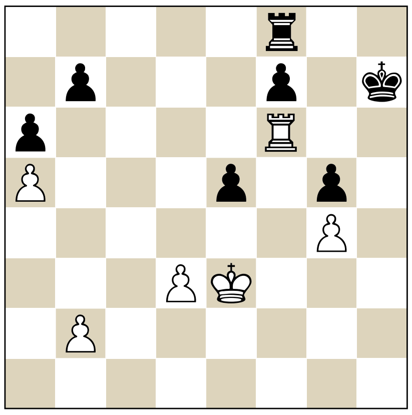
30...♖d4

It's very logical to take the opportunity to remove the influential pawn on f6, but 30...♖d6 (30...♔g8 31.♔e2 ♖d6 32.♖h5 ♖c8 33.♖xg5+ comes to the same position) 31.♔e2 ♔g8 (not 31...♖c8 32.♖fh1) 32.♖h5 (32.♖fh1 ♖xf6 33.♖xh7 ♖f4 and 32.♖h6 ♖c8 are not too dangerous) 32...♖c8 33.♖xg5+ ♔f8 34.♖xe5 ♖c2+ 35.♔e3 ♖xb2 was objectively a better defence.

31.♖fh1

The only try, as 31.♔e2 ♖xg4 32.♖fh1 ♖h4 relieves the pressure.

31...♖f4+ 32.♔e3 ♖xf6 33.♖xh7+ ♔g8 34.♖h8+ ♔g7 35.♖1h7+ ♔g6 36.♖h6+ ♔g7 37.♖8h7+ ♔g8 38.♖h8+ ♔g7 39.♖8h7+ ♔g8 40.♖xf6 ♔xh7



After a sequence of forcing play with a repetition thrown in to arrive at the time control, it's a good moment to take stock. Despite Black's extra pawn this endgame is rather unpleasant for him due to the extreme disparity in activity between the few remaining pieces.

41.♔e4

With little material left, retaining as much as possible is recommended. 41.♖b6 ♖d8 42.♖xb7 ♔g7 43.♔e4

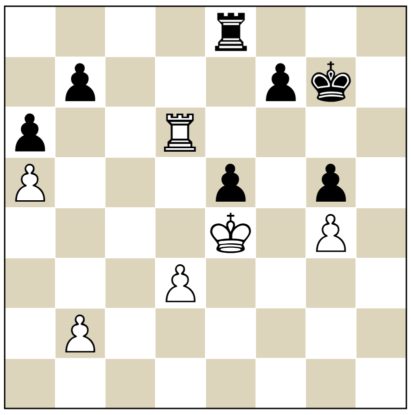
♖d4+ 44.♔xe5 ♖xg4 appeared drawish to me.

41...♔g7 42.♖d6

Again avoiding 42.♖b6 ♖d8 43.♔xe5 ♖xd3 44.♖xb7 ♖f3, when Black's task is simpler.

42...♖e8

It seems sensible to avoid weakening his second rank with 42...f6, then 43.♔f5 ♖f7 44.b4 ♖f8 45.♖e6 ♖f7 46.♖b6 causes a crisis.

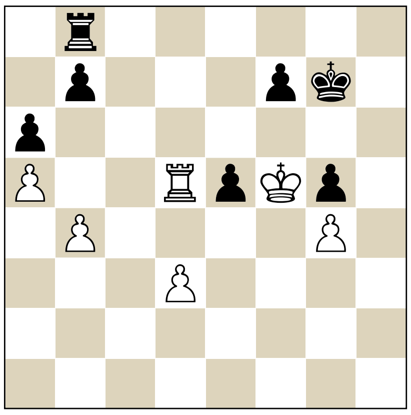


43.♔f5 ♖e7 44.b4 ♖e8 45.♖d7

It's still too early to start capturing pawns: 45.♖b6 ♖d8 46.♔xe5 ♖xd3 47.♖xb7 ♖f3 is OK for Black.

45...♖b8 46.♖d6 ♖e8 47.♖d7 ♖b8 48.♖d5

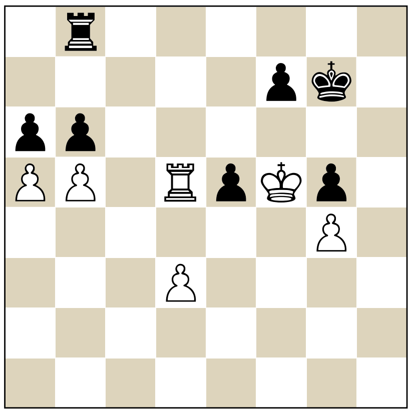
This crafty try proves very effective provoking a fatal error.



48...b6?

Daniel should have tried 48...♖e8. During the game I was not so sure about my winning chances after this, but after checking it a bit more it is clear that Black's task remains difficult: after 49.♖xe5 ♖d8 50.♔e4 ♔f6 51.d4 ♖h8 (51...♖d7 52.d5 looks hopeless, as 52...♖c7 53.♖e8 wins) 52.♖d5 (52.♖f5+ ♔g6 53.d5 f6 54.d6 ♔f7 55.♖c5 ♔e6 56.♖c7 f5+ 57.gxf5+ ♔xd6 58.♖xb7 ♖h4+ 59.♔d3 ♔e5 holds on) 52...♔e6! (52...♖h4 53.♖d6+ ♔e7 54.♖b6 ♖xg4+ 55.♔e5 also looks bad) 53.♖xg5 ♖h1 54.♖e5+ ♔d6 55.♖f5 ♖e1+, when Black is still fighting, although the material balance is now in White's favour.

49.b5! I had encountered close relatives of this dirty trick in previous games, and it works like a charm here.



49...♖a8

There is no hope after 49...axb5 50.♖xb5, or 49...bxa5 50.bxa6.

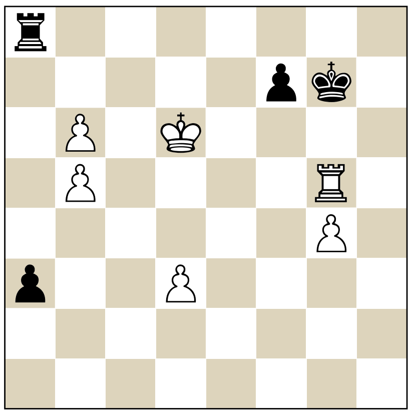
50.axb6 a5 51.♔xe5

When contemplating my 48th move, at first I thought Black could survive in the line 51.♖d7 ♖b8 52.♖a7 ♖xb6 53.♖xa5 ♖d6, but then realised that the advanced position of White's king enables me to give decisive support to the duo of b-pawns.

51...a4 52.♔d6 52.b7 ♖b8 53.♔d6 ♖xb7 54.♔c6 is also good enough.

52...a3 After 52...♖d8+ 53.♔c5 ♖xd5+ 54.♔xd5 a3 55.b7 a2 56.b8♕ a1♕ 57.♕e5+ swaps queens to prevent any practical problems.

53.♖xg5+



Black resigned, as 53...♔f8 54.♖h5 ♖d8+ 55.♔c7 a2 56.♖h1 wins easily.

NOTES BY
David Howell

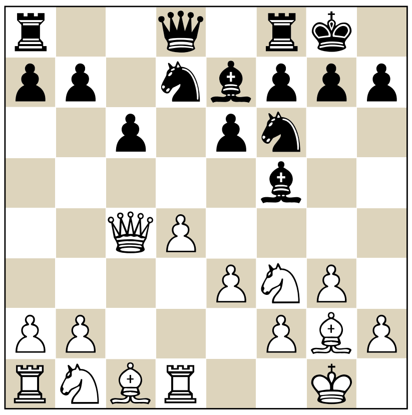
SL 1.4 – D23
Viktor Laznicka
David Howell
Gibraltar 2012 (8)

After a disastrous few months, in which I had even gone an unthinkable 18 (!) games without winning, I travelled to Gibraltar with the sole intention of proving to myself that I occasionally knew how to play chess. The following game was especially difficult, since I had tarnished a promising tournament by self-destructing in a drawn endgame the previous day, after more than 7 hours and 100 moves. Needless to say, I had barely slept that night and I made the firm resolution not to prepare for any of the remaining games, instead saving my energy to play creatively. For once this wasn't a foolish decision.

1.d4 d5

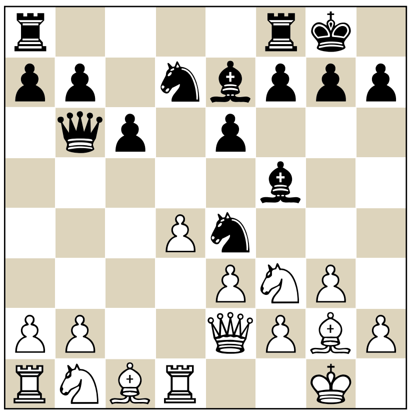
A recent addition to my repertoire and perhaps a small surprise for my opponent.

2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♕c2 dxc4 5.♕xc4 ♗f5 6.g3 e6 7.♗g2 ♘bd7 8.e3 ♗e7 9.0-0 0-0 10.♖d1



A typical position for this variation but, in all honesty, I was already on my own here, with no real clue of Black's optimal plans. White has the simple idea of developing his queenside pieces and eventually organising the e3-e4 advance, when his extra space would grant him a pleasant position. In the meantime, I decided to play some natural-looking moves and hope that my counterplay was quick enough.

10...♘e4 11.♕e2 ♕b6

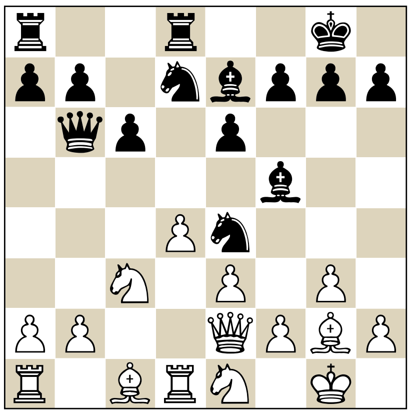


12.♘c3

12.♘bd2 is also possible and leads to a different sort of struggle. The main idea is: 12...♖fd8 13.♘h4!? ♗xh4 (13...♘xd2 14.♘xf5 exf5 15.♗xd2 gives White some hopes for an advantage) 14.♘xe4 ♗e7 15.♘c3. I had some worries about this position, but Black might be fine after 15...♘f6 16.e4 ♗g4 17.f3 e5!.

12...♖fd8 13.♘e1

White has a few plausible knight moves, but again I was most concerned about 13.♘h4!? Play might transpose to the above note after 13...♗xh4 14.♘xe4.



13...♘xc3

Keeping the tension with 13...♘df6 is a worthy alternative. However, being an inveterate Grünfeld player, I was attracted by the resulting pawn structure and decided to keep things simple.

14.bxc3 ♗g6 15.e4 c5 16.♗e3 ♕a5

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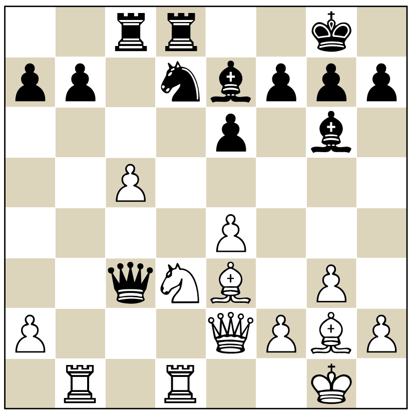
David Howell: 'I travelled to Gibraltar with the sole intention of proving to myself that I occasionally knew how to play chess.'

Pre-empting ♖ab1, but my opponent now played very energetically.

17.♘d3 ♕xc3 18.dxc5 ♖ac8 19.♖ab1

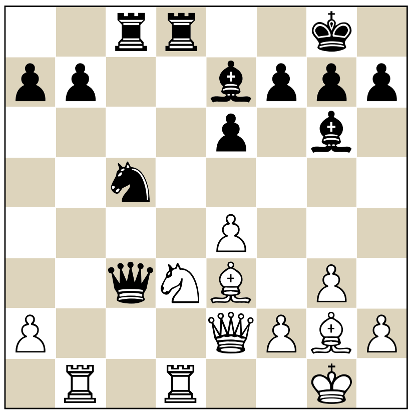
Consistent and seemingly critical, but in hindsight 19.♖ac1 was a more ambitious try. Nevertheless, during the game I felt that Black had his full share of the chances after either 19...♕a3 or 19...♕a5.



19...♘xc5!

Necessary. I had foreseen that this was possible, though it took me a while to fully convince myself that White had no tricks. At first glance Black's pieces, combined with a weak back rank, might allow a tactical shot, but everything seems to hold.

19...b6 20.♖dc1 ♕a3 21.c6 leaves White with some initiative.

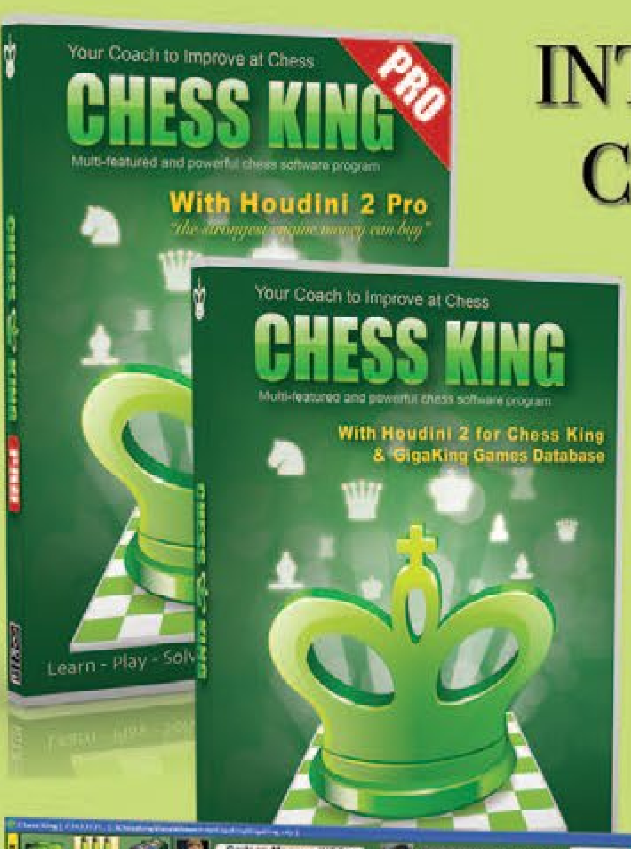


20.♖bc1

Playable, and obviously very tempting, but I feel this was a mistake from a psychological point of view. Black is now allowed to show the main point of his combination, and White has to be accurate in order to maintain the balance.

Instead, White should have reconciled himself to some simplifications. Here are some sample variations:

– 20.♘xc5 ♖xd1+ (not 20...♗xc5?? 21.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 22.♖c1) 21.♕xd1 ♗xc5 22.♗xc5 (22.♖c1 ♕xe3) 22...♕xc5 23.♖xb7, with rough equality;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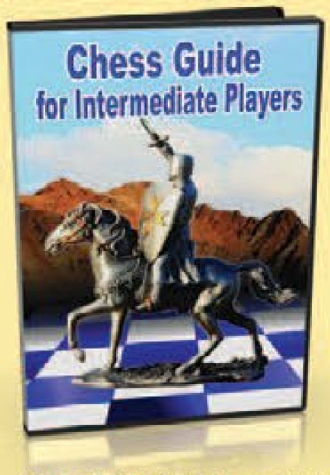
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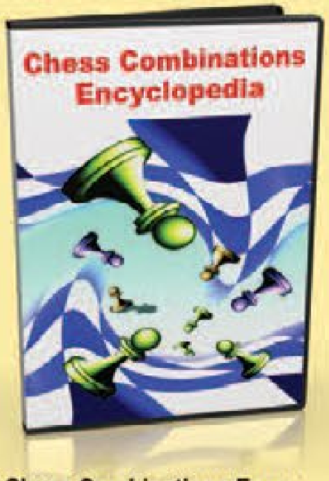
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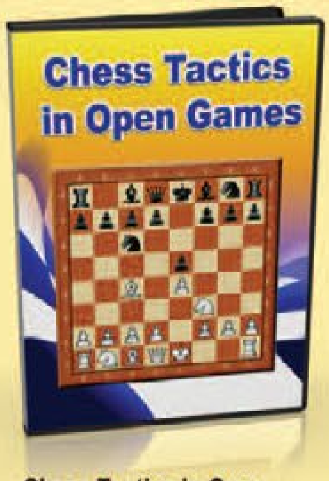
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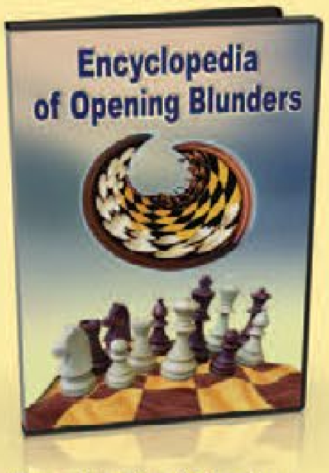
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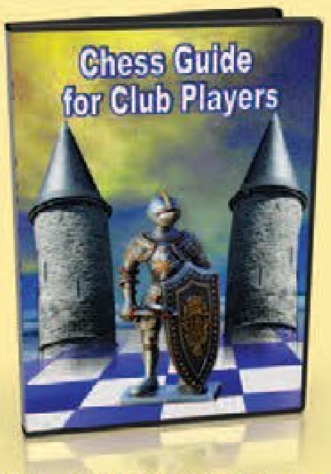
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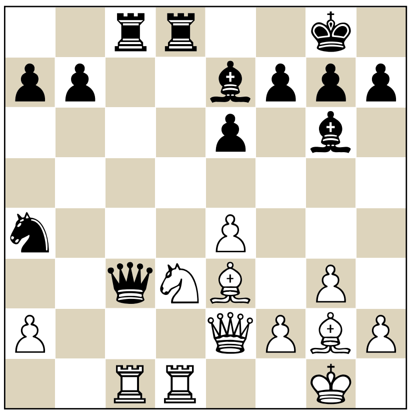
– 20.♗xc5 ♗xc5 21.♖bc1 ♕a5 22.♘xc5 ♖xd1+ 23.♕xd1 ♖xc5 24.♖xc5 ♕xc5 25.♕d8+ ♕f8 26.♕c7 h6 27.♕xb7 ♕a3 28.♕c8+ ♔h7 29.♕c2, with a likely draw.

20...♘a4!

Suddenly Black's pieces all co-ordinate perfectly and the tactics work in his favour.

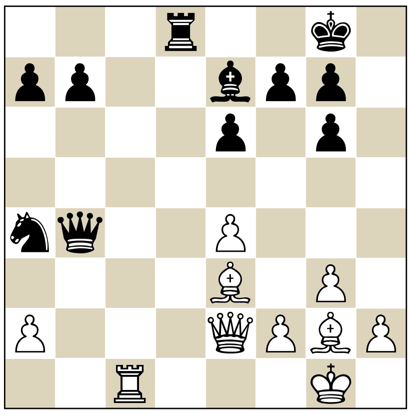


21.♘f4

Avoiding the depressing 21.♖xc3? ♘xc3 22.♕e1 ♘xd1 23.♕xd1 ♖c3 when Black has good chances of converting his material advantage after recapturing the knight.

24.♗f1? makes things even worse after 24...♗xe4

21...♕b4 22.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 23.♘xg6 hxg6

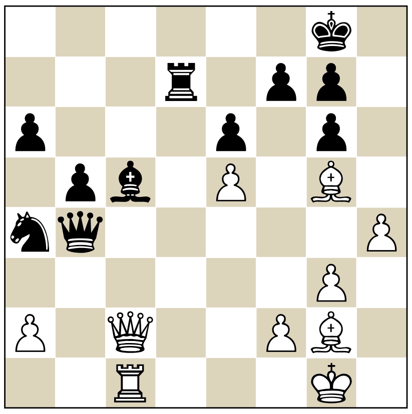


24.e5?

The computer's suggestion of 24.♕c2! seems to be best. This is far from clear at first, but White's pieces have regained their co-ordination and therefore he would have decent compensation for the pawn.

24...♗c5 25.♗g5 ♖d7 26.♕c2 b5 27.h4 a6!

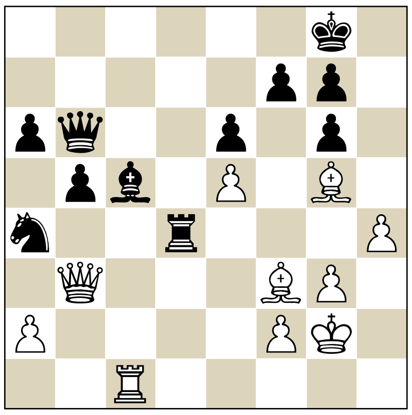
I was very proud of this move, simply consolidating the queenside. The onus is now on White to come up with a plan, but this is not an easy task due to Black's domination of the centre and queenside.



28.♗f3 ♖d4 29.♕b3 ♕a5 30.♔g2 ♕b6?!

Attempting to regroup, but missing a big opportunity.

30...♖b4 would have been more accurate.

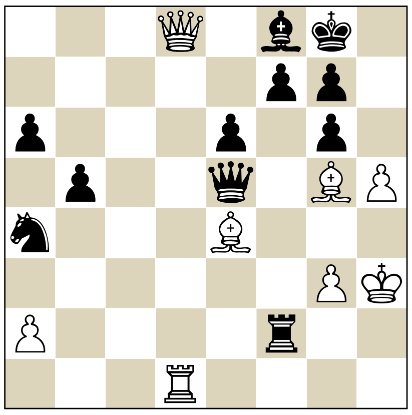


31.♖h1?

The final mistake. White's kingside play is simply too slow and Black can now decisively enter with his rook.

31.♗e3 was more resilient.

31...♖b4 32.♕d3 ♖b2 33.♔h3 ♖xf2 34.♗e4 ♕c7 35.h5 ♕xe5 36.♕d8+ ♗f8 37.♖d1



Gibraltar 2012

						TPR
1	Nigel Short	IGM	ENG	2677	8	2838
2	Hou Yifan	IGM	CHN	2605	8	2872
3	Michael Adams	IGM	ENG	2724	7½	2807
4	Shakhr.Mamedyarov	IGM	AZE	2747	7½	2783
5	Victor Bologan	IGM	MDA	2680	7½	2734
6	Emil Sutovsky	IGM	ISR	2703	7½	2669
7	Le Quang Liem	IGM	VIE	2714	7	2733
8	Zoltan Almasi	IGM	HUN	2717	7	2730
9	David Howell	IGM	ENG	2603	7	2725
10	Krishnan Sasikiran	IGM	IND	2700	7	2717
11	Sergei Movsesian	IGM	ARM	2700	7	2711
12	Peter Svidler	IGM	RUS	2749	7	2700
13	Parimarjan Negi	IGM	IND	2641	7	2694
14	Judit Polgar	IGM	HUN	2710	7	2693
15	Viktor Laznicka	IGM	CZE	2704	7	2681
16	Daniel Fridman	IGM	GER	2660	7	2632
17	Jan Gustafsson	IGM	GER	2643	7	2628
18	Artur Jussupow	IGM	GER	2569	7	2625
19	Saleh A R Salem	IGM	UAE	2505	7	2621
20	Emanuel Berg	IGM	SWE	2550	7	2603
21	Gabriel Sargissian	IGM	ARM	2683	7	2594
22	Meelis Kanep	IGM	EST	2509	7	2556
23	Alexis Cabrera	IGM	ESP	2504	7	2544
24	G N Gopal	IGM	IND	2566	6½	2647
25	Alexey Shirov	IGM	LAT	2710	6½	2629
26	Sabino Brunello	IGM	ITA	2581	6½	2617
27	Kaido Kulaots	IGM	EST	2581	6½	2604
28	Viktor Erdos	IGM	HUN	2634	6½	2601
29	Zhu Chen	IGM	QAT	2472	6½	2598
30	Pia Cramling	IGM	SWE	2491	6½	2591
31	Anna Muzychuk	IM	SLO	2580	6½	2586
32	Felipe De Cresce	IGM	BRA	2497	6½	2582
33	Tamir Nabaty	IGM	ISR	2563	6½	2575
34	Antoaneta Stefanova	IGM	BUL	2523	6½	2571
35	Daniyyl Dvirnyy	IM	ITA	2492	6½	2530
36	Salvador Del Rio	IGM	ESP	2531	6½	2528
37	Abhijeet Gupta	IGM	IND	2652	6½	2525
38	Mariya Muzychuk	IM	UKR	2483	6½	2525
39	Edoardo Iturrizaga	IGM	VEN	2649	6½	2510
40	Anna Zatonskih	IM	USA	2506	6½	2502

256 players, 10 rounds

Sneakily threatening 38.♕xf8+, but Black has a couple of effective replies.

37...f6

37...♕xe4! would have been a more impressive finish to the game: 38.♕xf8+ ♔h7 and Black wins. Much to my embarassment, this didn't even cross my mind. Luckily the game continuation is simple enough. Black's king turns out to be safe as houses.

38.♗xg6 fxg5 39.♖d7 ♖f3

White resigned. ■

Short Stories

In the Land of Sultan Khan

In early February, immediately after my slightly unexpected triumph in the Tradewise Gibraltar Masters, I had the opportunity to travel to Karachi – a bustling city of 18 million – at the invitation of Hanif Qureshi, Chairman of the Pakistan Chess Players Association (PCPA). The second PCPA Open Chess Championship and Zaheeruddin Farooqui Trophy (named in honour of the late national champion and Board 2 silver-medallist at the 1974 Nice Olympiad) took place in surroundings of comfortable but slightly faded grandeur, at the Beach Luxury Hotel – the edifice of which dates back almost exactly to the founding of the nation itself, in 1947.

If the great English historian H.J. Murray is to be believed, the game of chess can trace its origins back 1500 years to the fertile Indus Valley in what is now Pakistan. While not attempting to dispute the central hypothesis of his 1913 magnum opus *A History of Chess*, it would be intellectually dishonest not to mention the obvious doubt about this viewpoint, namely the total absence of references in early Sanskrit literature to the game known when the book was written or indeed discovered in the century since its publication. That important caveat aside, it is indisputable that the Indian sub-continent has had a very long association with chess. It is particularly regrettable, therefore, that this deep connection has been allowed to wither, in Pakistan, in recent decades.

In 1929, a servant in the retinue of Colonel Nawab Sir Umar Hayat Khan – later aide-de-camp to His Majesty King George V – became British Chess Champion, a feat he would repeat in 1932 and 1933. In a brief but spectacular career, Mir Sultan Khan became one of the world's leading players (ranked seventh, according to the statistician Jeff Sonas), most famously defeating Jose Raul Capablanca himself at Hastings 1930/31. At the end of 1933 he left Europe forever to return to the Saguda District of the Punjab where, apart from a decidedly one-sided encounter with the Indian veteran V.K. Khadilkar, in February 1935, which ended 9½-½ for the younger player, he apparently retired – at least according to his English biographer, R.N. Coles. There is reason to suspect that European writers might not know the whole story however. Raees Farooqui, the son of the former national champion, for one, assured me that his father had played Sultan Khan in the 1960s, towards the end of his life. It would not be at all surprising if other such unrecorded informal encounters may have taken place.

Incidentally, whilst I am on the subject, I would like to take the opportunity to rectify a general misconception about supposed poor quality of Sultan Khan's opening play. As Edward Winter points out on his website chesshistory.com, contemporary comment made much of his weak English and 'illiteracy' which allegedly denied him access to proper theoretical manuals. Whatever the precise truth on that score, it did not mean that Sultan Khan was incapable of playing the early phase of the game well. To note just a couple of things: firstly, his 1929 British Championship game against R.P. Michell is the first recorded example of the 'Chebanenko Slav' – many years before Mr. Chebanenko was born. Secondly, his victory over Capablanca involves one of the earliest known outings of the so-called Petrosian System of the Queen's Indian. While it is true he didn't actually invent the latter, there is certainly a strong case for naming the variation after him.

Regrettably chess in Pakistan has sunk a long way since those halcyon days. Unlike neighbouring India, which has flourished in the decades since a young boy from Madras started making headlines, organised chess has stagnated and atrophied. In fact, so far detached has the game in Pakistan become from the normal international circuit that most of my colleagues seemed incredulous that any serious event was taking place at all in the country. It was hardly surprising, therefore, that the visit of the first grandmaster since Igor Platonov and Alexander Kotov in 1975,was warmly welcomed by the locals. When I first entered the playing hall, everyone simply stopped the clocks and stood up to applaud me – a gesture as touching as it was embarrassing.

The tournament contained a number of local innovations including the first

On the flight to Islamabad, Nigel Short met Dr. Fehmida Mirza, National Assembly Speaker and a keen amateur chess fan.

live transmission of a game on the Internet (usually that of the previous champion, Mahmood Lodhi, although for most of the event he trailed the eventual winner, Wasim Akram) and excellent, unprecedented media coverage thanks to the sagacious appointment of a PCPA press officer. Interviews usually began with chess before invariably straying onto the national religion – cricket. As Pakistan were in the process of whitewashing the world number 1 team, England, during my stay, my comments were often quoted on TV and in print – rather amusingly for someone whose views on cricket have never once been sought in my home country.

On the final evening in Karachi, Hanif received a discrete tip-off that the Pakistan cricket all-rounder, Shahid 'Boom Boom' Afridi, was booked on the same flight as us to the capital, Islamabad, the following morning. I should perhaps explain to New In Chess readers from non-Commonwealth countries that this canny spin-bowler and intermittently explosive batsman is worshipped as a God in his home country. He happens also to be one of my favourite players, so we decided to invest in an upgrade to business class.

It turned out to be a fortuitous move because, not only did we meet the cricketing legend, but also a large number of other dignitaries. While waiting in the lounge, I was first introduced to President Zardari's sister, Mrs. Faryal Talpur. She is a member of parliament but, as is the nature of such things, in reality wields rather more influence than most ministers. In a very warm and open manner, she immediately invited me to visit as a guest of the Sindh government. Unfortunately, due to time-constraints, I was unable to take up this kind offer. I also met the Speaker of the Assembly, Dr. Fehmida Mirza, who turned out to be a keen amateur chess fan and asked whether I might teach her a few tricks!

Islamabad is a lot smaller, greener, cooler and less chaotic than Karachi. It was not surprising that Hanif chose to settle there with his Russian/German, economist wife when he returned to his native land from years of living abroad. Our brief one and a half day visit was confined to sumptuous dining with the family, some rather pleasant sightseeing and meeting two VIPs – Syed Amir Hamza Gilani, Director General of the Pakistan Sports Board and MP Ijaz Jakhrani, who was Federal Sports Minister until a few weeks ago.

We then drove on through the evening until our final destination, Lahore – capital of the Punjab, a province of a modest 100 million+ souls. Unfortunately by the time we arrived I wasn't feeling too well and, sure enough, it wasn't long before I was vomiting violently. Despite feeling somewhat weak, I was able to give a small simul (my second of the visit: I had given another in Sindh Province) against children, in a large tent, at the inauguration of the Punjab Championship – another PCPA initiative – the next morning. The delightful warmth of reception, which involved flowers, drummers and huge banners, was deeply affecting. The tournament itself was held in the nearby hotel. To be honest, the conditions would probably not be considered satisfactory by European standards (a bit too cramped and inadequately lit) but no one seemed to be complaining.

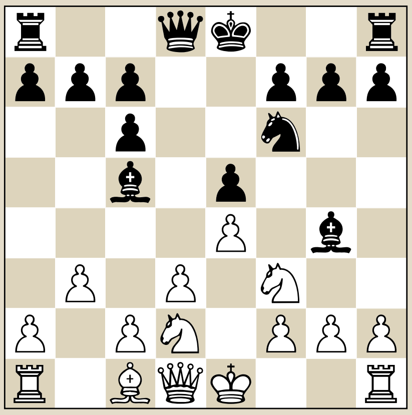
It was a great trip, apart from the food poisoning, and to one gorged on the relentlessly negative images of Pakistan emanating from the western media, a welcome bonus. What then are the chances that the country may in future emulate, in chess, its larger and more powerful neighbour, India, to the East?

In the short term, the prospects are poor. The infrastructure simply isn't there. You will look in vain for Pakistan on the FIDE rating list because the federation has not paid its dues. Even with ratings hypothetically restored, no player, male or female, ranks inside the top 3,000 in the world. There are insufficient tournaments and none of an international nature. The PCPA is starting to address this, but it has a very long way to go. The conspicuous absence of the Pakistan Chess Federation throughout my visit in itself tells a story. They were invited, but chose not to attend. This hopelessly dysfunctional body is by far the biggest impediment to the development of the game in the country. It doesn't answer e-mails and attempts to thwart any initiative it does not control. Its President, Altaf Chaudhry, was thrown into prison in 2010. The National Highways Authority, which he used to chair until his fall from grace, has been referred to in the Senate as a 'den of corruption'. Long suffering chess lovers have finally had enough, which is why the PCPA came into existence. Justice does not always prevail but perhaps this time it has a chance. ■

The Amazing Chess Adventures of Garry Kasparov

Luke McShane

When I opened the previous edition of New In Chess, I was naturally curious to read Kramnik's annotations to our game from the London Chess Classic in 2011. This made me smile:



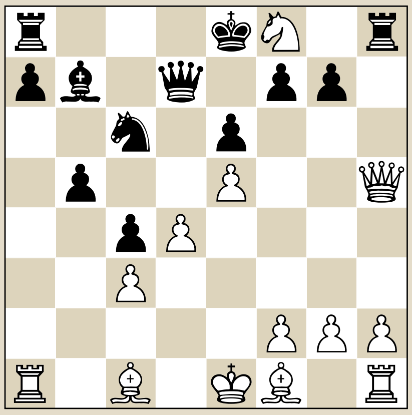
McShane-Kramnik
London 2011
position after 7.♘bd2

Kramnik wrote: 'Here I wasted ten minutes studying an interesting move – 7...♕d4. I very much wanted to play it, since it is indeed a rare and pretty move – without even capturing a pawn, the queen simply places itself *en prise*, and as early as the seventh move. This move was also strong, but, unfortunately, after 8.♘xd4 ♗xd1 White has 9.♘2f3!. This is effectively his only reply, since otherwise Black simply wins a pawn. Alas, after 9.♘2f3 ♘g4 10.♔xd1 ♘xf2+ 11.♔e2 ♘xh1 12.♘f5 Black is simply worse – White wins back the knight.'

Funnily enough, I also spent at least 10 minutes checking the same variation. I believe my initial thought was that 7...♕d4 8.♘xd4 ♗xd1 9.♘4f3 ♗xc2 10.♔e2 followed by ♘f3-e1 would trap the bishop. I'm not sure I foresaw the computer's witty retort 10...♘g4 11.♘e1 ♗d1+!, but I did smell a rat, and didn't play my previous move 7.♘bd2 until I was satisfied that 9.♘2f3! would be strong.

You may be wondering what any of this has got to do with books. Well, I'm not sure what went 'ping' inside Kramnik's head to make him spot that 7...♕d4 was even possible, but I know exactly why I spotted it. The night before this game, I was browsing through Kasparov's latest book, *Garry Kasparov on Garry Kasparov, Part 1: 1973-1985*.

This position arose in the game Kasparov-Kupreichik, from the USSR Championship in Minsk, 1979. Kasparov has just played 13.♘h7xf8, capturing a bishop.



Allow me to quote the commentary of Kasparov's trainer Nikitin:

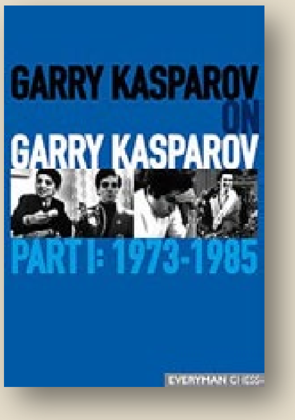
'The demonstrator, after removing the bishop from f8, had only just placed the white knight there, when I felt a shiver down my spine: the move 13...♕xd4!! immediately came to mind. The inevitability of White's defeat after 14.cxd4 ♖xh5 seemed so obvious, that my heart missed a beat and I reached in my pocket for a vasodilator... I looked at the stage, glanced at the culprit of my sufferings, and I immediately realised that he too had seen the opponent's knock-out blow.

However, when he saw this Garry unexpectedly quickly composed himself and took the psychologically correct decision. He did not jump up and walk around the stage, as he would often have done before, but with an imperturbable and perhaps even self-confident appearance he remained seated, demonstrating his readiness to continue the 'blitz'. Five minutes passed, then ten... Kupreichik sat and thought... it was hard to believe that this sharp-sighted and clever tactician would not notice the queen sacrifice.'

It seems Kupreichik cogitated for more than 20 minutes, apparently without noticing the possibility at all, before playing 13...♖xh5? and Kasparov went on to win the game.

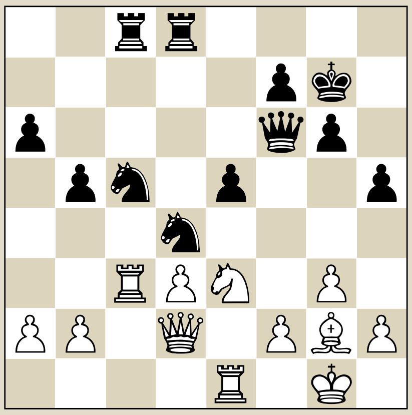
Nikitin again: 'Some four hours later we met Garik, who had not yet recovered from his sufferings, but was happy and content after an accurately conducted ending and a much needed win. "Well done, Garinka, you didn't let on", said his mother about the oversight on the 13th(!) move. "You're growing up lad", I added, intentionally rather crudely.'

I became quite absorbed by the book that evening, and I think this passage provides a perfect example of the sort of thing which drew me in. Much of the book consists of similarly well-chosen passages written by seconds, supporters and journalists, and for me the book was definitely strengthened rather than diluted by their perspective. Of course, Kasparov's own voice comes through strongly throughout this book, which is the latest in his series of historical volumes. This one covers Kasparov's childhood up to the first aborted World Championship match with Karpov. In the Foreword, Kasparov notes that it is partly based on his first book, *The Test of Time* (1986), and also thanks his former trainers Alexander Nikitin and Alexander Shakarov for their help in preparing the manuscript. I don't have a copy of *The Test of Time* to compare, but the patchwork of stories which I alluded to earlier is woven around the plot of the key tournaments. The ever-present influence of politics on the careers of chess players in the Soviet Union is well known, but I found Kasparov's point of view particularly interesting.



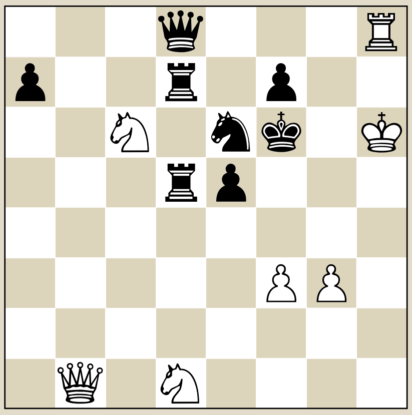
Garry Kasparov on Garry Kasparov
Part 1: 1973-1985
Garry Kasparov
Everyman Chess, 2011

Another strand of interest lies in the fact that reading about Kasparov's bounding improvement, almost unpunctuated by setbacks, one is inevitably prompted to make comparisons with Magnus Carlsen's career over the past few years. In fact, it's possible to enjoy this book without looking at the games at all. They are annotated in detail, and I was pleasantly surprised by how many of the games were completely new to me. It feels trite to point out that I enjoyed Kasparov's games, so let me give an example of an episode which made a particular impression. This position was reached in the game Giardelli-Kasparov from the Malta Olympiad in 1980. Giardelli played 26.♘c2, and Kasparov is critical of his own reply 26...b4?! though he went on to win nicely just a few moves later. But the 17-year-old Kasparov had calculated some wonderful lines after the alternative 26.♖ec1:



‘26.♖ec1 ♘xd3!!, and the black knights demonstrate miracles of mutual assistance: 27.♖xc8 ♘xc1 28.♘d5?! ♖xd5! 29.♗xd5 ♕d6!, with gain of material, or 28.♖xd8 ♕xd8! 29.♔h1! (29.♔f1 ♘xa2 30.b3 ♕c7! or 30.♗d5 ♘c6!) 29...♕c8! 30.a3 ♘ce2 31.h4 a5 etc.’

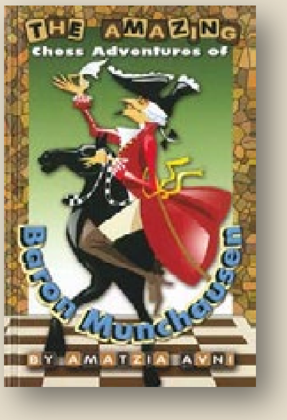
As this example shows, Kasparov is no pedestrian equestrian, but it seems he met his match in the following position where he faced the blindfolded Baron Munchausen, possibly the strongest player you've never heard of. (p. 99)



Munchausen (blindfolded) - Garry Kasparov, 1990

1.♖g8!! 1.♘xd8 ♖xd1 attacks the queen and menaces mate on h1. 1.♖xd8 is more promising, as 1...♖xd1 2.♕xd1 wins, but here Black can head for a fortress with 1...♘xd8 2.♘e3 ♘xc6 3.♕f5+ ♔e7 4.♘xd5+ ♖xd5 5.♔g7 ♘d8, which we are assured is drawn (although I must admit it is not obvious to me). **1...♕xg8 2.♕f5+!! ♔xf5 3.♘e7+! ♖xe7 4.♘e3+ ♔f6 5.♘xd5+ ♔f5 6.♘xe7+ ♔f6 7.♘xg8+ ♔f5 8.♘e7+ ♔f6 9.♘d5+ ♔f5 10.g4** Mate.

A superb combination, but probably not one you will find in the database, as it is actually taken from a study composed by Albert Beliavsky, with the first couple of moves omitted. The cheeky title of this article was adapted from Amatzia Avni's new book *The Amazing Chess Adventures of Baron Munchausen*, where this diagram appears. It is a compilation of articles originally written for the British magazine *Chess*, as well as a few new ones. The Israeli psychologist's previous books include the popular *Creative Chess* as well as *The Grandmaster's Mind*. I remember that the former contained an abundance of surprising studies, positions and ideas which Avni had collected. In some ways, this book brings more of what I remember, but the character of Baron Munchausen adds a whimsical flavour, and a few tall tales along the way.



The Amazing Chess Adventures of Baron Munchausen
Amatzia Avni
Mongoose Press, 2011

You'd be wrong to think of Baron Munchausen as an entirely mythical being. According to Wikipedia, he was a nobleman who lived in the 1700s. Funnily enough, Avni refers to the Wikipedia entry in one of his stories, and suggests that anyone who is prepared to trust Wikipedia would have no problem believing the Baron's claims about his chess prowess! But back to the Baron... After serving in the military, he became notorious for telling some far-fetched tales about his exploits. Perhaps some of these tales were originally derived from a folk tradition, but they were eventually written down and have since been reworked and adapted many times, as has the spelling of Munchausen. They have even been made into films, most recently a 1988 British film by Terry Gilliam of Monty Python fame, as well as a 1911 film by Georges Méliès (who himself was celebrated in the recent film *Hugo* directed by Martin Scorsese).

The modus operandi of the articles in Avni's book is that our narrator is a friend of the Baron and often persuades him to recount a story, which involves some remarkable situation he encountered at the chessboard. The positions are taken from studies, as above, as well as actual games, and naturally provide an opportunity for the Baron to showcase his extraordinary skill!

Writing about endgame studies in the previous issue, I suggested that the unnatural starting positions which often occur can become more palatable when you consider the study from the point of view of the composer who has constructed it. In a way, Avni's Munchausen performs a similar function, as his patter tends to pretend that the position has not arisen entirely out of the blue, and so we are mentally misdirected from whatever hand the composer had in it. That is, if you choose to suspend your disbelief...

On a similar subject, I was struck by one of the Baron's more philosophical musings:

'What does "chess beauty" mean to you, the greatest player of all time?' He was quick to respond. 'Waves', he said... 'When I was young, I used to sit on the seashore, looking at the waves. I was fascinated: one wave reaches the shore, crashed and disappeared. Then comes another and another... and so on.'

'And...?'

'Well,' M. confessed, 'this is what attracts me in a chess duel. One player carries out an aggressive act; his opponent defends successfully. The attacker launches another wave of attack; still the defense holds. But then comes another wave and another, until the defense crumbles and victory is achieved.'

Although I enjoyed the afternoon spent with this incorrigible raconteur, I can certainly imagine that some would find this kind of thing too light-hearted, or even pointless. Indeed it seems that even our narrator has had these doubts himself, in the past.

'The Baron gave me a sympathetic glance. "I've just read a review of a book of yours, in the latest Kingpin', he said. 'The critic wrote some nasty things about you. Are you okay?'

'I might be, in a year or two', I muttered.

'...I quoted some derogatory comments from another source: *"Amatzia does that God awful Munchinrubbish....* He should drop (it) and do some proper columns." '

Thankfully, the conclusion after some tears, is this: 'Go fetch Miss Doubtful and Mr NotSoSober [two recurring characters from these stories], and let us grant the readers some more *God Awful Munchinrubbish*'. I'm glad that they did!

Avni is an imaginative and thoughtful writer, and occasionally enjoys presenting a gentle satire, be it of Internet chess, of books promising to reveal the 'Secrets' of all and sundry, or the indulgent annotations of grandmasters. Our Baron certainly has a sense of humour.

'The Baron burst into my flat, a sparkle in his eyes. "Have you seen it?" he asked, very excitedly.

"I sure have", I was happy to report. We both referred to the newly published book *Chess Secrets I've Learned From My Fritz*. The author, Tony Priest, had spent a considerable time with a Tibetan monk, who taught him the language of computers...

"I was impressed with the finding that the white-squared knights (b1, g8) were stronger than their counterparts (g1, b8)", I claimed.

"Right, I've always suspected that," said Munchausen, "...but had no statistical back-up, until now."

He proceeded: "You know, the chapter I liked the most was the one in which Priest, aided by Fritz, revealed that short castling is particularly beneficial when your c-pawn has crossed the 4th rank." '

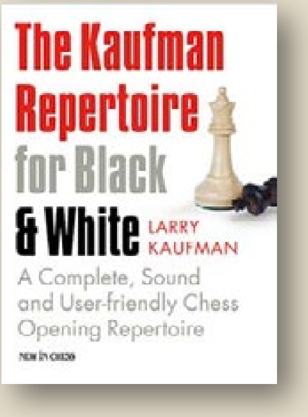
It seems this kind of 'chess by statistics' has become increasingly popular, at least as a subject for discussion. I suspect most players are taught the relative values of the pieces at an early stage, whereby pawns are worth 1 point, bishops and knights 3, rooks 5 and the queen 9. In a position where material is not equal, the first thing I think about is how unequal it is, based on that point count and then whether the positional factors over or under compensate for that, based on my experience. I have never been tempted to change the value of a bishop to 3¼ in my mental framework, nor decide exactly how much to deduct for a doubled pawn. There is no fact of the matter, but the debate has been infused with meaning because the relative weighting of such values is an important factor in the practical strength of computer programs, and so these values get tweaked based on the results of thousands of games played between the world's top engines. Avni's joke reminded me of Kasparov's insightful observation, from an article called 'The Chess Master and the Computer' which can be found on the *New York Review of Books* website.

'With the supremacy of the chess machines now apparent and the contest of "Man vs. Machine" a thing of the past, perhaps it is time to return to the goals that made computer chess so attractive to many of the finest minds of the twentieth century. Playing better chess was a problem they wanted to solve, yes, and it has been solved. But there were other goals as well: to develop a program that played chess by thinking like a human, perhaps even by learning the game as a human does. Surely this would be a far more fruitful avenue of investigation than creating, as we are doing, ever-faster algorithms to run on ever-faster hardware.'

We may even have more nuanced assessments to boot, but to my knowledge there is still no top computer program which approaches the game in a similar way to a human – by forming a plan, for example. It is not that the human thought process is better, and such a program would almost certainly play worse, at first, than the programs we've already got. But it might well teach us something.

Nevertheless, the rise of chess computers has had an impact on the way we think, and Larry Kaufman's book *The Kaufman Repertoire for Black & White* is a fascinating example of that. Although this is a repertoire book, Kaufman kicks off with a discussion of the relative value of material, which is germane as the repertoire rests on a huge amount of computer analysis. I learned that Kaufman was responsible for the evaluation function of Rybka 3, and has co-created another very strong engine, Komodo, making him one of very few grandmasters who are also extremely familiar with the internal workings of these engines. His familiarity with interpreting these computer assessments clearly played a key role in this book, and this analysis of hundreds of thousands of positions has enabled him to design a repertoire with a computer's stamp of approval, combined with his own watchful eye for exceptions.

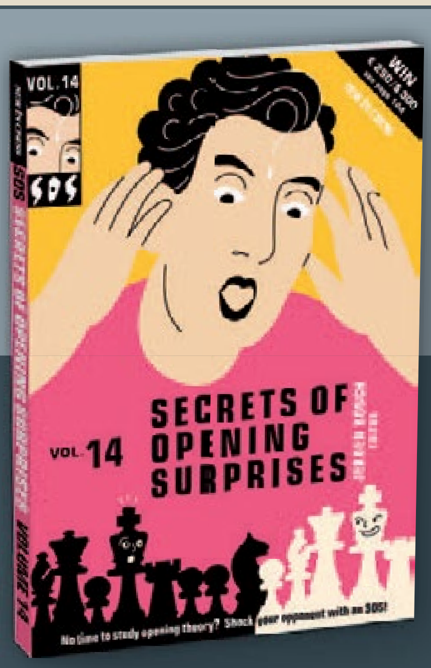
It's an enormously ambitious idea, especially when you consider that a repertoire for White *and* Black is crammed into less than 500 pages. (In fact, the book began as an attempt to update his 2003 book *The Chess Advantage in Black and White*, but Kaufman soon realised that so much had changed since then that he might as well start from scratch.) Still, Kaufman explains that 'In my opinion few people can remember everything in even one book (I know I can't), so I don't see much point in trying to cover everything in a repertoire in multiple volumes, except to aid correspondence players.' When I think about the tiny fraction of my opening books which I have properly committed to memory, I have to admit that he has a point.


The Kaufman Repertoire for Black & White
LARRY KAUFMAN
A Complete, Sound and User-friendly Chess Opening Repertoire
NEW IN CHESS

The Kaufman Repertoire for Black & White
Larry Kaufman
New In Chess,
2011

I should point out that this book is not some kind of 'database dump'. There is no detailed explanation of typical opening themes, as you would get in a specialised book, but the explanations are clear and concisely explain the reasoning behind the choices.

The White repertoire is based around 1.d4, while the Black repertoire focuses on the Breyer and the Grünfeld. The Breyer is a solid and flexible choice, but personally I'd feel less comfortable playing some of the wilder lines of the Grünfeld on the basis of this book alone. On the other hand, some readers may find that a careful study of Kaufman's variations would leave them considerably better prepared than their opponents. In any case, given its enormous breadth of coverage, I'm sure that a great number of players will find something useful in this book. ■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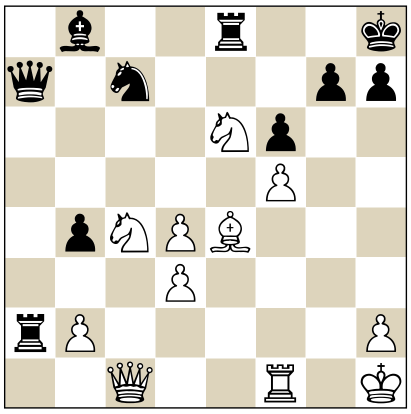
Jan Timman

Back to Wijk aan Zee

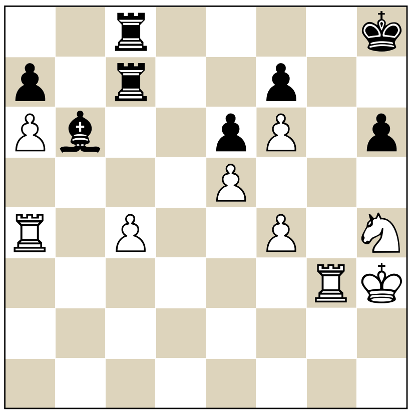
> **'It had been 42 years since I had debuted in the Wijk aan Zee B-group. In the meantime, this group had grown a lot stronger.'**

Eight years ago, I played in the main group of Wijk aan Zee for the last time. In the previous issue, Short wrote about my performance there that I 'got pulverised'. He also compared me to a 'flabby boxer'. Somewhat exaggerated, I would say. To put things into some perspective, I will give you two positions from that tournament, from Rounds 4 and 5.



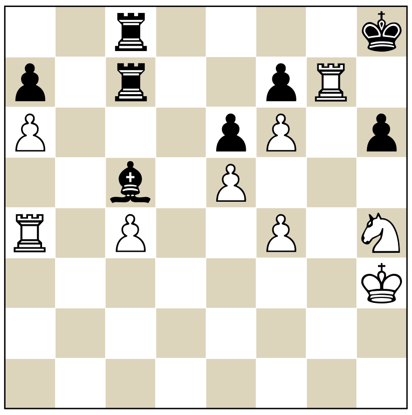
Timman-Van Wely
Wijk aan Zee 2004 (4)
position after 36...♘c7

The winning move here was the obvious 37.♘d6. After the forced continuation 37...♘xe6 38.♘xe8 ♘f8 White has the hammer blow 39.♕c8!, with the point of 39...♖xb2 40.♘c7!. Black has no better now than 40...♖xh2+ 41.♔xh2 ♗xc7+. White goes 42.♔g2 ♗d6 43.♕c4, and the win is a matter of time.
However, I thought I had seen a more elegant win with **37.♘xg7?**
But Black is not forced to take the knight here. Van Wely played **37...♖g8!** and got the better position.



Timman-Svidler
Wijk aan Zee 2004 (6)
position after 41.♘h4

A position just after the time-control. Black played **41...♗f2** and after **42.♖g7 ♗c5**

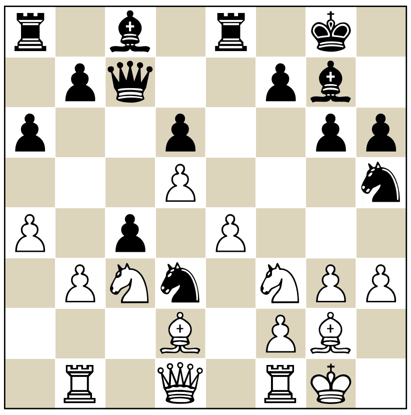


43.♖g3 ♗f2 44.♖g7 ♗c5 45.♖g3 he could claim a draw, because after 45...♗f2 the same position had been on the board three times. I must have been extremely tired, because it's not exactly hard to see that White is completely winning after 43.f5. And two moves later I could have played the same thing again.

If I had won these two games, I would have had a positive score after 10 rounds. OK, I lost my last three games. That is the problem when you are over 50 and have to play at the highest level for 13 rounds; you will get tired. In May 2004, the organization invited me again, but I decided to think about it first, and in the end I did not play anymore.

So I was a bit surprised when I got an invitation for the B-group in October last year. I did not hesitate long. It had been 42 years since I had debuted in the Wijk aan Zee B-group. In the meantime, this group had grown a lot stronger, the average Elo just topping 2600. A few years ago, Short also played in the B-group, commenting that he hadn't played such a strong tournament for ages. I had the same feeling. This time, the group was slightly less strong, on paper at least, than in previous years, because the organizers had decided to invite three ladies. It reminded me of the Inventi tournament in Antwerp, especially when the ladies drew consecutive numbers here as well.

There were some real lady-killers amongst the gentlemen. L'Ami and Tiviakov garnered their plus-3 score in those very rounds. This was towards the end of the tournament. At the start, the ladies gave as good as they got. Especially striking was the refreshing way in which the European ladies' champion Cmilyte tore into the eventual tournament winner.



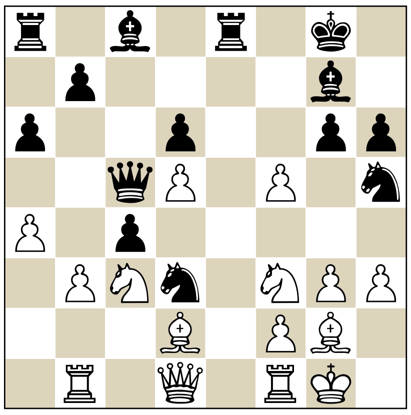
Harikrishna-Cmilyte
position after 18.b3

The white opening set-up has gone wrong. After 18...♗d7 Black would have an ideal Benoni position. A typical continuation then is 19.bxc4 ♕xc4 20.♖xb7 ♘c5 21.♖c7 ♖ac8, and after the rook swap Black recaptures the pawn without losing her advantage. But Cmilyte is a very enterprising player and opts for a more aggressive continuation:

18...f5!?
This advance leads to sharp play.

19.exf5 Playing into Black's hand. Better was 19.♘h4, after which the position is probably dynamically balanced.

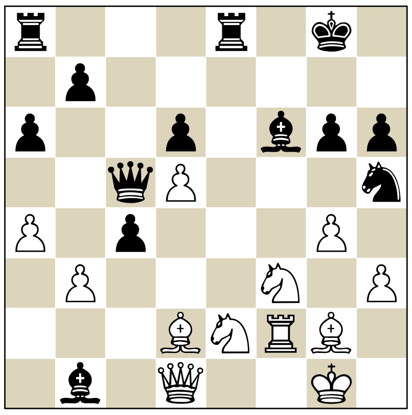
19...♕c5 The point of the previous move. If White takes his bishop to e3, she will sacrifice an exchange.



20.f6
Harikrishna thought a long time about this intermediate move. He must have seen the position after move 27 in his calculations. Yet the immediate 20.♘e2 would have been slightly better, although this was hard to foresee.

20...♗xf6 21.♘e2 ♗f5
Black is following the plan she had started on move 18. Stronger was 21...c3, with a large advantage.

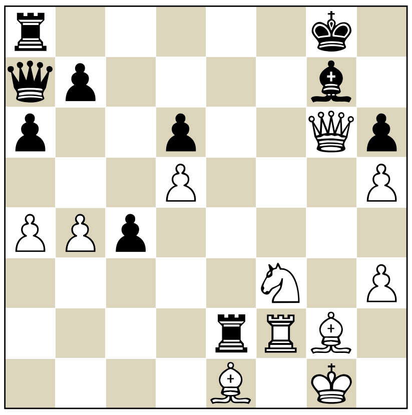
22.g4 ♘xf2 23.♖xf2 ♗xb1



24.b4
An important intermediate move. The queen is driven to a less active square.

24...♕a7 25.gxh5 ♗c2 26.♕xc2 ♖xe2 27.♕xg6+ Now White has created sufficient counterplay.

27...♗g7 28.♗e1



28...c3 Black continues to play as sharply as possible. A good alternative was 28...♕e3.

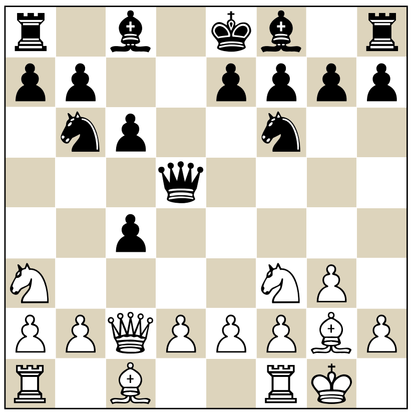
29.♔f1 c2 30.♖xe2 c1♕ Now that White has a second queen, White is forced to give perpetual check.

31.♖e8+ ♖xe8 32.♕xe8+ ♗f8 33.♕g6+ ♗g7 34.♕e6+ ♔f8 35.♕xd6+ ♔e8 36.♕e6+ ♔f8 37.♕f5+ ♔g8 38.♕e6+ ♔f8 39.♕d6+ ♔e8 40.♕e6+ ♔f8
Draw.

Meanwhile, my tournament was going well. In Round 5, I won an attractive game against Ernst.

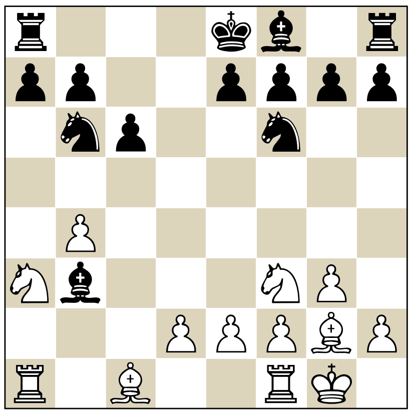
RE 7.6 – A11
Jan Timman
Sipke Ernst
Wijk aan Zee B 2012 (5)

1.c4 c6 2.♘f3 d5 3.g3 ♘f6 4.♗g2 dxc4 5.0-0 ♘bd7 6.♕c2 ♘b6 7.♘a3 ♕d5



8.b3
A well-known pawn sacrifice. White wants to open files on the queenside in order to exploit his lead in development. Later in the tournament, Reinderman played 8.♘e1 against the same opponent, winning back the pawn after 8...♕d4 9.e3 ♕g4 10.e4. That method, too, offers chances of an opening advantage.

8...cxb3 9.axb3 ♗e6 10.b4 ♕b3 11.♕xb3 ♗xb3

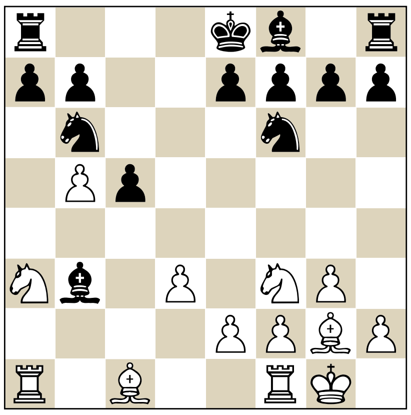


12.b5
White wants to open the long diagonal for the king's bishop as quickly as possible.

12...c5
After the alternative 12...♗a4 White

can continue 13.♘e5, the point being 13...♘fd7 14.bxc6! ♘xe5 15.cxb7 ♖b8 16.d4, and White is better.

13.d3

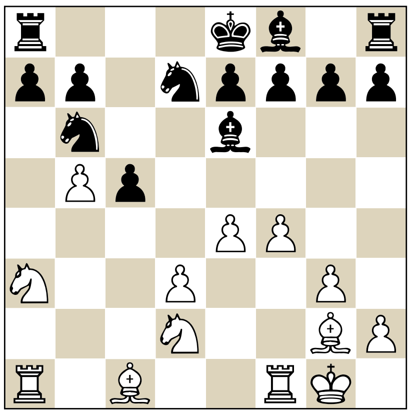


13...♘fd7

Probably inaccurate. Correct was 13...g6, intending to try and develop the kingside.

14.♘d2 ♗d5 15.e4 ♗e6 16.f4

White clearly has excellent compensation for the pawn.

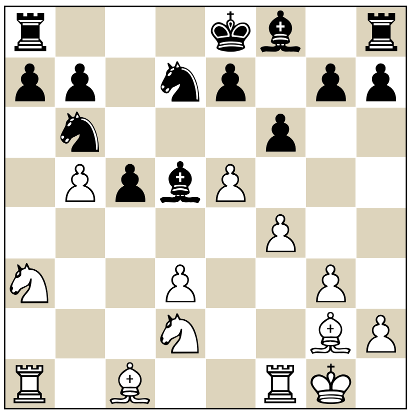


16...f6

An obvious enough move in itself, but White has a sharp refutation.

Here, too, 16...g6 was the correct move, although after 17.♗b2 ♖g8 18.♘ac4 White will be firmly in control.

17.e5 ♗d5



18.e6!

When I played this, I didn't realize that I was putting a theme from my recent book *The Art of the Endgame* in practice, viz. the 'disappearing trick'. With his 17th and 18th moves White sheds his e-pawn without the position changing in any way.

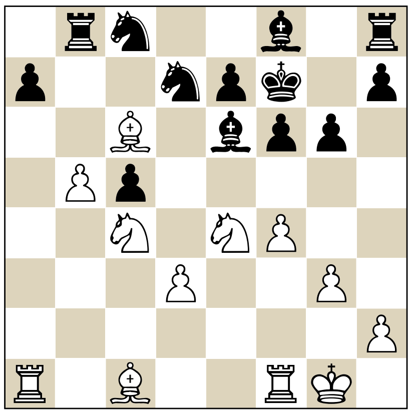
18...♗xe6 19.♗xb7

The dream of every Réti player: the long diagonal has gloriously been opened.

19...♖b8 20.♗c6 g6

Too late. Black would have had more of a hope after 20...♗f5.

21.♘ac4 ♘c8 22.♘e4 ♔f7



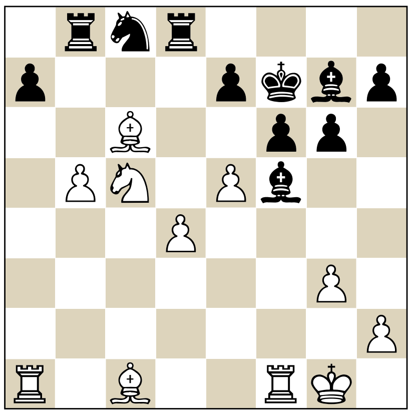
23.♘e5+!

An elegant turn. Black cannot take the knight with the f-pawn, as 23...fxe5 fails to 24.♘g5+.

23...♘xe5 24.fxe5 ♗f5 25.♘xc5 ♗g7 26.d4

Even stronger was the immediate 26.♖xf5, because now Black could still have tried 26...♗h3.

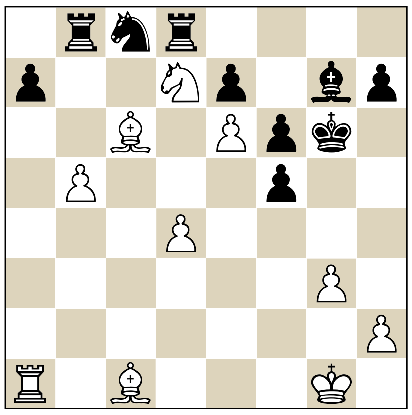
26...♖d8



27.♖xf5!

This exchange sacrifice yields White control of the entire board.

27...gxf5 28.e6+ ♔g6 29.♘d7



Remarkable – although White has not completely developed his queenside, he reigns supreme. Black has no defence.

29...♘d6 30.♘xb8 ♖xb8 31.♖xa7 ♘xb5 32.♖xe7 ♗h6 33.♗e8+

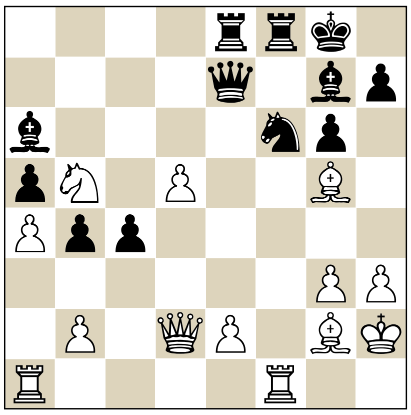
Black resigned.

After this victory my tournament threatened to turn into a nightmare. It started with the storm that blew a Philippine freighter aground off the coast of Wijk aan Zee. My tournament stranded at the same time. The ship was lying very close to our hotel. Hordes of disaster tourists passed my hotel window. Wijk aan Zee had never been so busy. The dune pavilion did excellent business. I was glad for the owner. He had told me that for a few days he had been forced to close his business early for lack of customers. Now he did not have enough hands to serve all those disaster tourists their coffees.

It was not the hordes of people that disturbed my concentration, of course; it was the storm itself that gave me sleepless nights. Another thing that throws obstacles in your path when you get older. In the old days, I usually managed to boost myself up after a bad night. This time, the next three rounds were one great blunder fest that I can only think back on with horror.

After three days the storm died down and the freighter was towed to IJmuiden harbour. I failed to refloat my tournament after three consecutive defeats.

In Round 11, I did manage to win another game, though.



Timman-Cmilyte (11)
position after 23...♖ae8

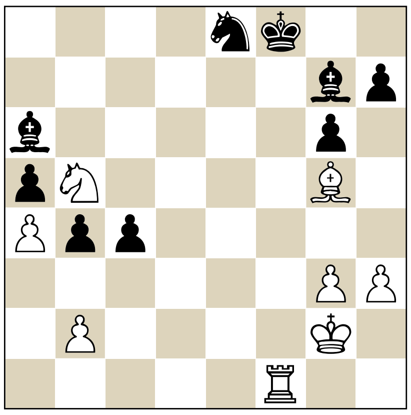
White is a pawn up, but Black is threatening to get counterplay.

24.d6! With a nice combination White liquidates to a superior endgame.

24...♕xe2 25.d7 ♕xd2 26.dxe8♕ ♕xg2+

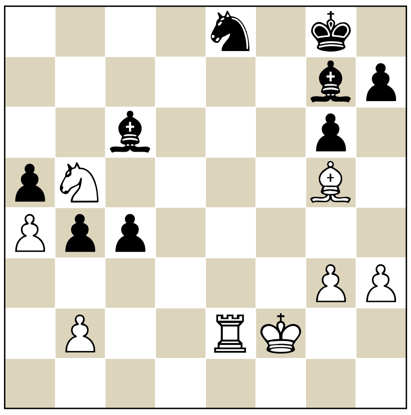
A desperado. After 26...♕xg5 27.♕e6+ White would win at once.

27.♔xg2 ♘xe8 28.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 29.♖f1+



This position I had in mind when making my 24th move. White is going to cover the b-pawn from the side.

29...♔g8 30.♖e1 ♗b7+ 31.♔f2 ♗c6 32.♖e2



32...♗xb5

Desperation. But 32...b3 33.♗d8 would have been equally hopeless in the long run.

NEW IN CHESS

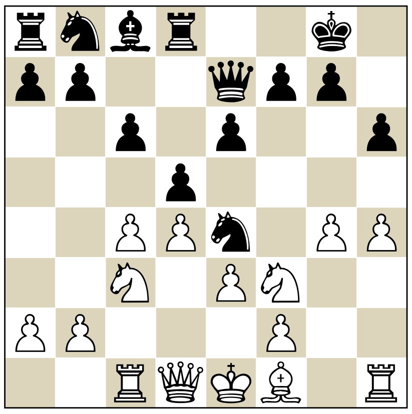
Jan Timman's return to Wijk aan Zee generated a lot of publicity. When the Dutch GM sat down for his first game, the spectators welcomed him back with applause.

33.axb5 ♘d6 34.b6 a4 35.♗e7 ♗d4+ 36.♔f3 ♘f5 37.b7 ♗a7 38.♗c5 Black resigned.

Meanwhile, Harikrishna had a firm grip on the lead, but even he was not infallible, as the same round made clear.

QO 14.14 – D56
Sipke Ernst
Pentala Harikrishna
Wijk aan Zee B 2012 (11)

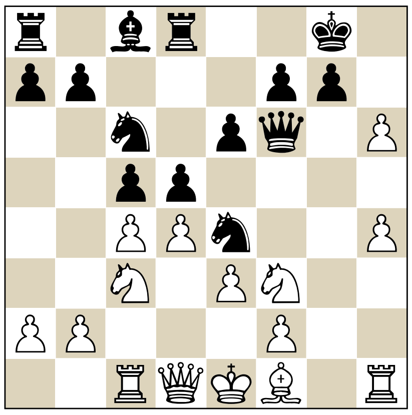
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗e7 5.♗g5 h6 6.♗h4 0-0 7.e3 ♘e4 8.♗xe7 ♕xe7 9.♖c1 c6 10.h4 ♖d8 11.g4



Aronian's method introduced last year, also against Harikrishna. White starts an offensive on the kingside, exploiting the fact that Black is not yet very active in the centre. The method was successful for Aronian, and it was interesting to see what Harikrishna had found to improve the black play. Ernst, incidentally, uses the method under slightly different circumstances, because Black has played 10...♖d8 instead of 10...♘d7.

11...c5 Logical. Black is trying to create counterplay in the centre.

12.g5 ♘c6 13.gxh6 ♕f6



Harikrishna played all these moves very quickly, probably because he had prepared everything. Strange preparation, though. Black has allowed his entire kingside to be eliminated, so his play in the centre will have to be extremely strong to prevent him from succumbing to a mating attack. For the moment, this counterplay doesn't amount to much.

14.hxg7 cxd4 15.♘xe4 dxe4

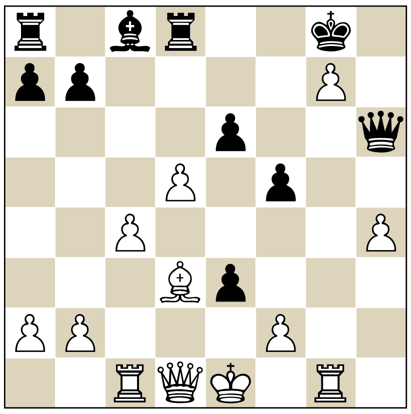
16.♘xd4

After 16...e5 White has 17.♕h5 now.

16...♕h6 17.♖g1 ♘xd4 18.exd4 e3 19.♗d3

A better alternative was 19.♖g3, since now Black has a forced draw.

19...f5 20.d5



20...exd5

Only here did Harikrishna start thinking. It looks like he is trying to win, since after 20...exf2+ 21.♔xf2 ♕xh4+ the White king will find it hard to avoid the enemy checks.

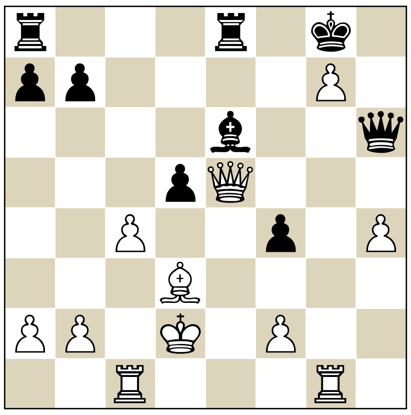
21.♕f3 ♗e6

An inglorious end to the preparation. It's a mystery why Black still won't take on f2.

22.♕xe3

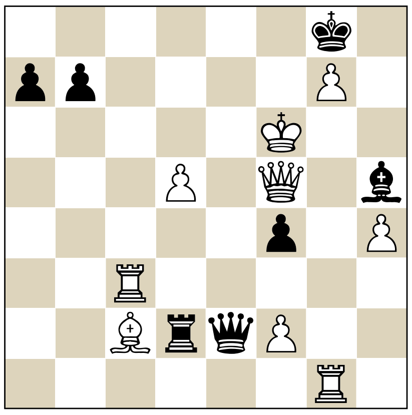
Now White is simply winning.

22...f4 23.♕e5 ♖e8 24.♔d2



The start of a long king march.

24...♗f7 25.♕g5 ♕b6 26.♕f5 ♕xb2+ 27.♔d1 ♖e4 28.cxd5 ♖ae8 29.♗xe4 ♕d4+ 30.♗d3 ♗h5+ 31.♔c2 ♕a4+ 32.♔b2 ♕b4+ 33.♔c2 ♕a4+ 34.♔d2 ♕a5+ 35.♖c3 ♕xa2+ 36.♖c2 ♕a5+ 37.♖c3 ♕a2+ 38.♗c2 ♖e2+ 39.♔d3 ♕a6+ 40.♖c4 ♕a3+ 41.♖c3 ♕a6+ 42.♔d4 ♖d2+ 43.♔e5 ♕e2+ 44.♔f6



The end of the king march. Black had run out of checks and resigned.

Even after this defeat Harikrishna remained half a point ahead of his pursuers.

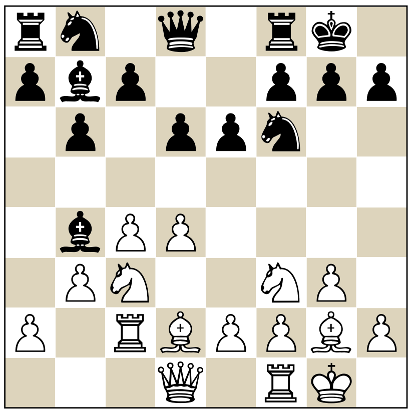
In the penultimate round, l'Ami could have drawn level with him by beating me. That didn't happen. On the contrary, it almost became one of the best games I had played in recent years.

QI 16.4 – E15
Erwin l'Ami
Jan Timman
Wijk aan Zee 2012 (12)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.g3 ♗a6 5.b3 ♗b4+ 6.♗d2 ♗e7 7.♘c3 0-0 8.♖c1 ♗b7 9.♗g2 ♗a3 10.♖c2 ♗b4

Black seems to be wasting tempos with all these bishop moves, but it's not too bad, because White hasn't played particularly constructive moves either. My main aim was to get a closed, strategic kind of game.

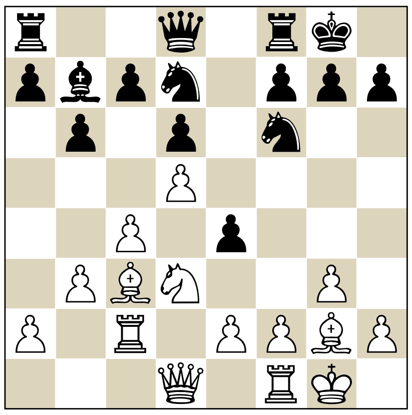
11.0-0 d6



12.d5

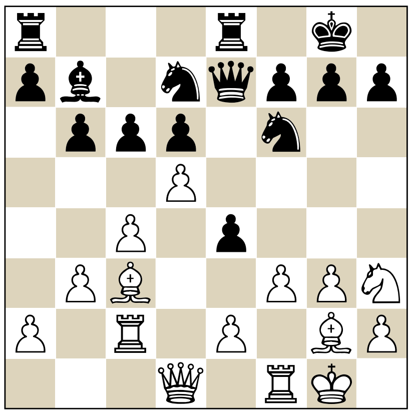
The standard advance to go for an advantage.

12...e5 13.♘e1 ♘bd7 14.♘d3 ♗xc3 15.♗xc3 e4!



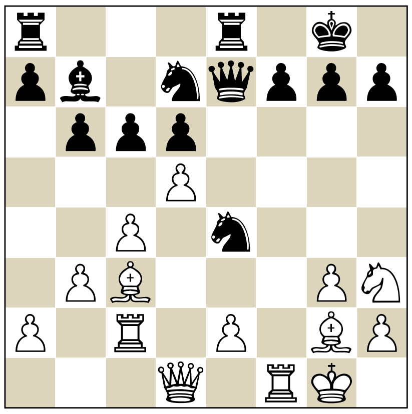
An important move. Black must get enough counterbalance in the centre. After other moves White would play 16.e4 himself.

16.♘f4 ♖e8 17.f3 ♕e7 18.♘h3 c6



19.dxc6

White could have continued 19.fxe4 here, when Black cannot take back in view of a beautiful combination: after 19...♘xe4



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

20.♗xg7! ♔xg7 21.♗xe4 ♕xe4 22.♖xf7+! White would win by force.

Taking on e4 is not a move to strategically worry Black unduly. He can calmly continue 19...c5 and then ensconce himself on e5.

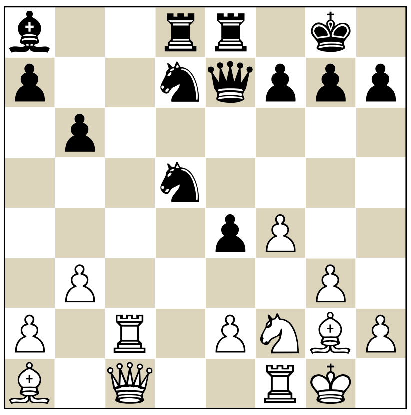
19...♗xc6 20.♘f2 ♖ad8 21.f4 d5 22.cxd5

It would have been better to maintain the tension with 22.♕d4. Now Black takes over the initiative.

22...♘xd5 23.♕c1 ♗a8

In this position, the bishop will always be covered.

24.♗a1



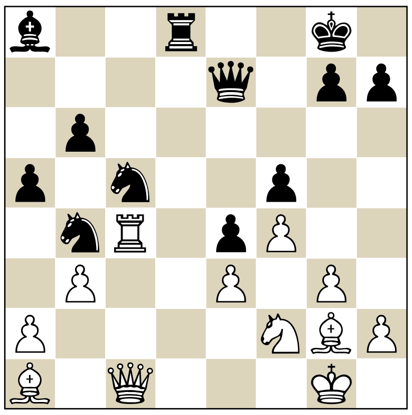
24...f5!

It is not easy to make yourself play a move like this, as it opens the long diagonal for the white queen's bishop. But it is more important to totally restrict the activity of the white minor pieces on the kingside.

25.♖d1 ♘c5 26.♖c4 a5

Preparing a knight jump to b4.

27.e3 ♘b4 28.♖xd8 ♖xd8

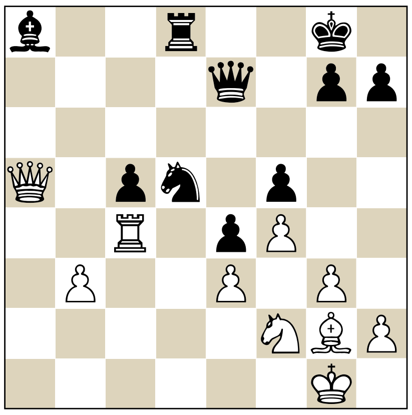


29.♗d4

A better defence was 29.♖d4 in order to swap at least another couple of rooks. The hesitant text-move opens the way to a large black advantage.

29...♘xa2 30.♕a3 ♘b4 31.♗xc5 bxc5 32.♕xa5 ♘d5

The point of Black's play. The attack on the e-pawn puts White in a tight corner.



33.♖xc5

L'Ami decides to continue to play actively, but he is facing strategic bankruptcy.

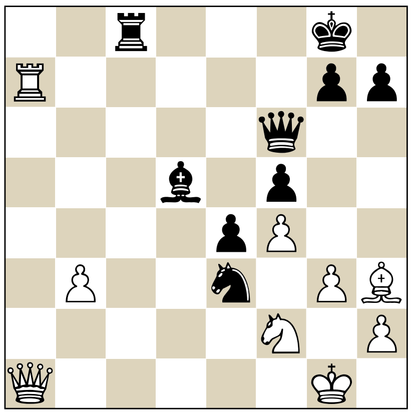
More tenacious was 33.♘d1, after which Black keeps his advantage with 33...♘xf4 34.gxf4 ♖xd1+ 35.♔f2 ♗d5.

33...♘xe3 The rook reigns supreme.

34.♖c7 ♕f6 35.♖a7 ♗d5 36.♗h3 ♖c8

The invasion via the c-file is decisive.

37.♕a1



37...♗xb3??

A horrible blunder. The quickest win would have been 37...♖c3, but 37...♕c3 would also have been more than enough. After 38.♕xc3 ♖xc3 39.♖a1 ♗xb3 White has nothing to hope for.

38.♘xe4

Of course. Suddenly the position has lost all its zing.

38...♕xa1+

Draw. ■

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Just Checking

Mihail Marin

NEW IN CHESS

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What is your favourite colour?
The shade of blue displayed by the Argentinean sky.

What kind of food makes you happy?
The Spanish natural and unpretentious cuisine is very enjoyable.

And what drink?
At different moments of the day or year, yerba mate, grapefruit juice, and horchata.

What was the best or most interesting book you ever read?
Dante's *La Divina Commedia*.

What is your favourite movie?
Gone With the Wind is a good candidate.

What is your favourite TV series?
As a teenager, I enjoyed *Rich man, poor man* a lot. I have liked many others since then, but the intensity of emotions was never the same.

Do you have a favourite actor?
A long list, including Viktor Kortchnoi in *Grossmejster* ☺.

And a favourite actress?
Julia Roberts.

What music do you like to listen to?
I like classic music first of all, and then Spanish and Italian music from the '60s and the '70s.

What was your best result ever?
The +3 score on Romania's top board at the Istanbul Olympiad, mainly because the team atmosphere was quite special on that occasion.

What was the best game you ever played?
My game against Alexandrov was awarded the second beauty prize of the 1996 Yerevan Olympiad. However, my win against Shirov, shortly after he had defeated Kramnik and supposedly became Kasparov's challenger, is the most memorable from a sporting point of view.

Who is your favourite chess player of all time?
I tend to change my favourite player every six months or so, depending on the books I am reading. In the background, I permanently keep the figure of a true giant, Robert James Fischer. His superiority over his contemporaries is unchallenged in the whole of history, and this may be a consequence of the fact that he managed to get closer to perfection than any other player.

Is there a chess book that had a profound influence on you?
The Razuvaev/Murakhvery book on Akiba Rubinstein helped me to understand strategy, to learn Russian, to switch from 1.e4 to 1.d4 and... to avoid dying from boredom during my army time.

What was the most exciting chess game you ever saw?
The 13th game of the 1972 Fischer-Spassky match in Reykjavik.

Do you have any superstitions concerning chess?
Botvinnik's type of superstition, regarding the regularity of the tournament program.

Who or what would you like to be if you weren't yourself?
A piano player, maybe Artur Rubinstein, or, even better, Mark Taimanov!

Which three people would you like to invite for dinner?
An evening with Robert James Fischer, Mario Vargas Llosa and Frederick Chopin would be a thrilling experience.

Is there something you'd love to learn?
I dream of learning Latin, which would open a new view on Antiquity. I may do it in the near future, actually.

What is your greatest fear?
That my time will expire before I accomplish all the things I planned.

What would you save from your house if it were on fire?
Probably my old hand-written opening notebooks. Not easy to replace something like that...

If you could change one thing in the chess world, what would it be?
Chess life would be more interesting without computers. But I guess there is no way to make this come true.

What is the stupidest rule in chess?
The draw by stalemate looks like a spot of discontinuity in the otherwise harmonious chess universe of values. To save a game by letting yourself be so completely humiliated as not being able to make a move looks rather undeserved. I would not call this rule stupid, though. 'Paradoxical' is a better description.

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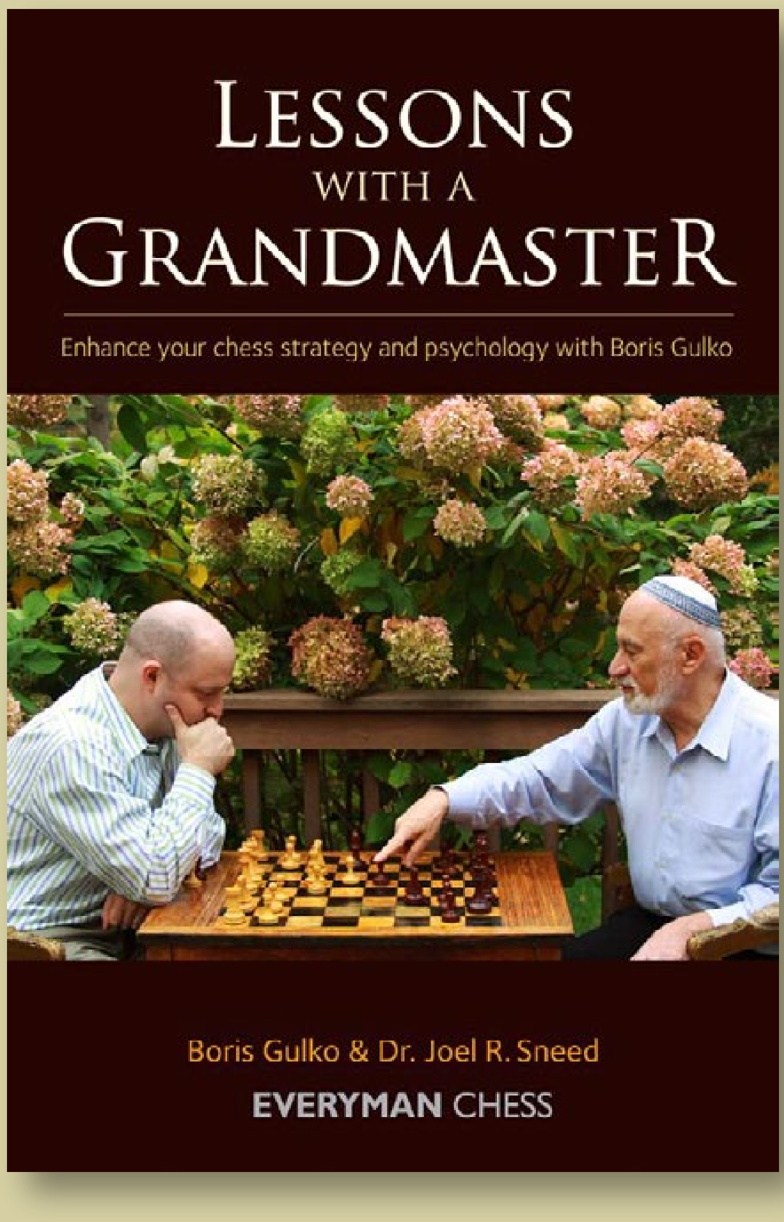
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